

Addenda #19 – August 2026, Part 2

Re: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Identity Politics

Who is Sophie Cunningham and why is she so controversial?

Sophie Elizabeth Cunningham, age twenty-nine, grew up on a Columbia, Missouri farm. She became the all-time leading scorer on her high school girls basketball team, leading them to four straight state championships and was also a placekicker for her high school boys football team. Cunningham went on to play basketball at the University of Missouri, setting records in several scoring categories, earning several NCAA player awards, helping her team to qualify for four NCAA Tournament appearances and being inducted into the Mizzou Athletics Hall of Fame. Cunningham played seven seasons for the Phoenix Mercury after they made her the 13th selection in the 2019 WNBA draft and is now playing in her eighth WNBA season after being traded to the Indiana Fever in February 2026.

Besides her aggressive defensive play, Cunningham is a deadly shooter, hitting more than 47% of her shots taken and 43.4% of 3-point shots taken, second best in the league and she is not even a starter for the Fever. She has led a relatively low key existence, never drawing too much attention, until she became a member of the Indiana Fever and assumed the role of veteran leader this season. If you watch Cunningham during games, she's always hustling, always encouraging and rallying her teammates, always giving direction to the younger players. Cunningham is a gorgeous, white, blonde, heterosexual, Christian, 6'1" female who is also one of the models for this year's Sports Illustrated Swimsuit edition. Cunningham has never apologized for her "white privilege," or played the DEI game that WNBA players are 'encouraged' by the league to play.

I spoke about Indiana Fever guard/forward Sophie Cunningham and her role as "enforcer" on the Fever team in Addenda #19, Part I. (Sophie earned a black belt in taekwondo at age six) Cunningham refers to herself as a "protector," always standing up for her teammates and herself. During a game against the Chicago Sky on August 8, 2026, Cunningham was driving to the basket for a layup, when Sky guard DiJonai Carrington contested the layup, wrapping her arm around Cunningham's head, hitting her in the jaw and dropping her hard to the floor.



Photos do not capture the violence of the incident. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGpwi23QBSE>

Cunningham bounced up and went after Carrington but the two were separated by teammates. Carrington was issued a Flagrant 2 technical foul and ejected from the game by officials, who said “... there was significant contact made to the head and neck area. Sophie was sent to the ground, again, midair, and the risk of injury was very real.”

“Clearly, I think it was like unnecessary. I’ve never really spoken to her and have no beef with her, but I guess she has some pent-up stuff. So, get your [expletive] off. That’s fine. I can take it,” said Cunningham in an interview after the game. While Cunningham was angry about the hard foul, she later said it had nothing to do with race. (Carrington is black, Cunningham is white) Carrington, on the other hand, who was shocked that she was ejected from the game, made the referees call all about race in a social media post, playing her “race card” from the locker room moments later.



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WHITE PRIVILEGE @indianafever

Carrington spoke with the media, saying “It was unfortunate that I made contact with her in the way that I did, but it was never intentional. Look, it might happen again. That’s just how I play.”

Interestingly, Carrington is a Black woman who claims she has “natural” ash blonde hair?? Former Indiana Fever guard Sydney Colson commented on social media after Cunningham was fouled by Carrington, “Love a trans foul,” apparently in a reference to revenge after Cunninghams comments about protecting women’s sports from male transgender athletes.

While Cunningham has refused to be drawn into ‘racial equity’ issues in the WNBA, she has made her opinions known about transgender athletes. In 2022, Cunningham reposted a comment protesting William (Lia) Thomas, the transgender swimmer at the University of Pennsylvania. Cunningham received immediate backlash from social media and backtracked slightly, issuing a statement saying that she supported all athletes. On June 21, 2026 Cunningham waded into the trans-athlete controversy again. In an interview with ESPN, Cunningham said she was against transgender participation in women's sports and that it was just ‘common sense’ to keep trans athletes out of women's sports. “I got a lot of negative feedback about me hating trans. And I’m like, I never once said that. I think that I am here to extend love. But I also think, with that, love is truth, being honest. And I want to protect young girls in a locker room, or young girls in sport who shouldn’t have to go [compete] against biological men.” Backlash on social media was immediate, but this time Sophie didn’t back down. “I said what I said. I think it’s common sense...” For her stand on biological boys/men competing against biological girls/women, and her defense of Fever teammate Caitlin Clark, some WNBA fans gave Cunningham the nickname “MAGA Barbie,” an insulting political designation that she strongly disputes. “All I have to say is I really am right in the middle, and I think a lot of America is like that. In our culture today you have to choose, and you have to be an extremist, and that’s just not me.”

The firestorm that followed was predictable. Sophie Cunningham supporters showed up at her games with ‘pro-woman’s sports’ posters, thanking her for speaking up for biological girls and holding signs saying, “We Love You Sophie.” Trans activists showed up in protest as well, yelling about rights for trans kids and calling her fans vulgar names. Supporters at a

Fever game against the Seattle Storm on July 28th were harassed by the crowd and forced to remove *their* signs, while allegedly allowing opponent's "Vote No on Protecting Female Sports" signs to remain. Two teenage girls sitting courtside, holding signs supporting Cunningham and wearing tee shirts with the letters XX | XY, were booed and cursed by Storm fans, with one fan yelling for security to "take the trash out." Storm co-owner Celeste Keaton approached the teens, cursing them for their signs and tee shirts, calling them "fucking insane" and causing one of the girls to burst into tears and run off the court. Imagine that! A grown adult gay woman, so enraged over signs and tee shirts worn by two teenage girls, confronting them and cursing them in front of a large audience. For her abuse, the league suspended Keaton for five games while Keatons supporters said she did nothing wrong.



WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert met with team presidents and general managers two weeks later to address the transgender athlete issue that has become so heated since that ESPN interview with Cunningham. The issue became even more publicized after two former NBA players, Enes Kantner and Royce White announced their intentions to enter the 2027 WNBA Draft, forcing the WNBA meeting to happen. Nothing productive came out of that August 12th meeting as officials said they would continue discussions on transgender eligibility in the WNBA. The WNBA was specifically established as a professional basketball league for women, "Only players who are women are eligible to play in the WNBA," according to the WNBA's 2026 collective bargaining agreement. Officials ended the meeting without being able to agree on specific criteria about what a woman is for the purpose of competing in the league, and instead, they attempted to re-direct the narrative. "Today's meeting covered a wide range of topics, including ongoing discussions on transgender athletes and the continued hate and vitriol directed at players online... There are no immediate eligibility matters affecting the WNBA and we strongly denounce the bad-faith efforts to use these topics to demean or marginalize others."

In other words, opponents of trans athletes must be labeled as haters and bigots, instead of recognizing their calling for common sense in protecting biological women. Engelbert and league officials are between a rock and a hard place right now. Whichever decision they make on allowing or banning transgender athletes from playing in the WNBA, risks alienating millions of fans on one side or the other. WNBA leadership *has* taken sides on this issue before. In June 2021, the WNBA recognized two Connecticut High School athletes for their accomplishments in track.



WNBA 🏀 @WNBA · Jun 2, 2021

Our first #WCW of #WNBA Pride goes out to Andraya Yearwood and Terry Miller.

We see you. We support you and all of the other trans athletes just trying to compete in the sports they love. ❤️ ...

Yearwood informed his parents in middle school that he was gay, then after being counseled by a therapist, decided he was a female. After enrolling at Cromwell High School, in Cromwell Connecticut, as a freshman, Yearwood updated his name and pronouns in school records to reflect his new female identity. Miller followed a similar path, deciding he was female while attending Bulkeley High School in Hartford Connecticut. Yearwood and Miller consistently outran biological female runners at track meets in the top two positions in their Sophomore through Senior years and won multiple state championships, competing against biological female athletes in sprint races while in high school.

This is just another example of the unfair advantage transgender female athletes have over their biological female competitors, validating the reason they should not be allowed to compete in girl's and women's sports.

In athletic events and sports relying on endurance, muscle strength, speed, and power, men typically outperform women because of fundamental sex differences dictated by their sex chromosomes and sex hormones at puberty, in particular, testosterone.

Trans women — who were assigned to the male sex at birth but identify as female — also have these advantages. If they undergo hormone therapy as part of gender-affirming measures, the differences to cisgender women are reduced. But even then, there are still advantages."

Fact check: Do trans women have unfair athletic advantage?; DW Global; March 20, 2025

A Clear and Present Danger – Threat #1, Addenda #8 Part 2 – July 2025

But “facts” don’t matter to the WNBA. Despite public declarations to the contrary, they take the side of biological males over biological females. In that 2021 Twitter post, the WNBA recognized Andraya Yearwood and Terry Miller for their accomplishments against biological female athletes. They *did not* recognize Selina Soule, Chelsea Mitchell, Alanna Smith or Ashley Nicoletti, biological female athletes who were displaced by transgender female athletes and not allowed to advance in state championship competitions. The WNBA whose bargaining agreement states only players who are women are eligible to play in the league, openly celebrates biological male athletes beating biological female athletes.

‘Traitors to Women’ — WNBA’s Resurfaced Tribute to Trans Athletes Sparks Major Outrage Amid Sophie Cunningham Drama; yahoo! Sports, August 13, 2026

Most WNBA players and coaches have come out in support of biological male trans-athletes since Cunningham spoke out. “We need to protect trans kids,” Minnesota Lynx coach Cheryl Reeve said. “To me, it's a human rights issue. Every kid has a right to sports.” Reeve, who publicly said Cunningham was perpetuating a problematic narrative and suggested the her statements “threatened” the WNBA's “safe spaces,” wore a tee shirt that said, Trans Kids Belong, during their August 2nd game against the Fever and told reporters after the game, she was “trying to educate” people about the issue. Cunningham has also passionately defended her position. “I'm there to love, but I'm also there to love biological women. I think that there are rights that need to be protected, and I'm going to stand true to that.” If you’re still unclear about the advantage transgender female/biological male athletes have against biological females, maybe this will clarify the issue.

The University of Washington women's soccer team won the Big Ten Tournament in November 2025 and advanced to the Elite Eight bracket of the NCAA Tournament. With a record of 25-11-10 over the past two seasons, you would be correct in observing that they are a talented and very competitive group of female athletes. On April 30, 2026, the Huskies played a “friendly” pre-season scrimmage against the Seattle Crossfire Premier Soccer Club, losing by a score of 2-1. The team they faced was not the *Girls* Elite U19 (ages 17 & 18) team, but the *Boys* U14 (ages 12 & 13) Elite team. This is not an uncommon matchup. Female sports teams often play opposite sex scrimmages, forcing female players to compete against males that are stronger, faster and more aggressive, in an effort to improve their level of play. The U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team has won medals in all but one Olympic woman’s soccer tournament and one Woman’s World Cup. In April 2017, the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team, with a roster that included All-Star players Carli Lloyd, Alex Morgan and Megan Rapino, lost a training camp scrimmage to the FC Dallas U15 Boys academy team. 2016 FIFA Player of the Year Carly Lloyd explained the purpose of the match to *US Women Soccer* editor Michael Hayes several years later. *Elite U-15 boys’ academy players typically possess a raw speed and verticality that mimics the fastest transition teams in international women’s soccer. By playing against a “bigger, stronger, faster” opponent (as described by Carli Lloyd), the USWNT coaching staff, led by Jill Ellis, could stress-test the defensive line.*

There you have it from the mouth of a woman who was an All-Star at every level played in soccer and was inducted into the National Soccer Hall of Fame. Thirteen and fourteen year biological boys are “bigger, stronger and faster” than biological females that had trained and played at the professional level for many years. Every WNBA team has an all-male practice squad they compete against for the same reasons; “We need their athleticism and size so they can really battle with our women,” Connecticut Sun assistant coach Brandi Poole explained to reporters. “Guys can do some things athletically that most women can’t do...” I wonder how Angel Reese will feel when she loses the defensive leader position for rebounding to a biological male/transgender female player like 6’3” Julie Tétart, the French trans basketball player who is averaging 20.7 points and 20 rebounds per game in the Ligue Féminine 2 (women’s division 2 league)? Tétart played in men’s regional basketball leagues for over two decades until she decided to change genders in 2021 and underwent hormone replacement therapy and gender reaffirming surgery before joining the women’s league. Tétart has said she would be open to playing in the league if contacted by a WNBA team. “If they contact me, I won't say no.”

An estimated 38% of WNBA players have publicly identified themselves as being lesbian, queer or non-binary, but there are most likely more players that have not identified as LGBTQ+ for various reasons. How will any of the estimated hundred or so heterosexual WNBA players feel about having to share a locker room and shower with biological male/trans-female players, especially if they have transitioned chemically but not surgically like former U Penn trans swimmer William (Lia) Thomas? His female teammates on the women’s swimming team were so creeped out about having to share a locker room with the 6’1” biological broad shouldered male with intact genitalia, that they chose to dress in their

locker room stalls or an adjacent family locker room across the hall and shower at different times than Thomas. When the women protested, the U Penn athletic department told them they had to respect his pronouns and “deal with the situation.”

Ref: A Clear and Present Danger – Threat #1, Addenda #8 – July 2025 Part 2

There was actually one transgender female athlete that played in the WNBA, Layshia Clarendon, who played for six teams during her 11-year career ending in 2024. Clarendon played all four years on her Cajon High School girls team, going undefeated and winning the conference championship each year, with an overall 117-10 record and being ranked in the top ten nationally for girls basketball teams. Clarendon was on the University of California, Berkeley women’s basketball team which won 32 games her senior year and appeared in the 2013 NCAA Woman’s Tournament Final Four. During her 12-year WNBA career, Clarendon played in 22 playoff games and one All-Star game.

The National Organization for Women was founded in 1966 to “promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls.” But over the last decade, the NOW lobbies almost exclusively for gender equality, abandoning biological females in its quest to further the gender revolution. In April 2024, the NOW deleted a controversial post on X (formerly Twitter) which claimed that anyone who objected to biological men who wished to identify as women and compete in sports against real women was “white supremacist patriarchy” at work; “Repeat after us: Weaponizing womanhood against other women is white supremacist patriarchy at work.” Over the course of nineteen high school, college and professional basketball seasons, Layshia Clarendon played in 567 basketball games, in place of biological female athletes. The NOW no longer advocates for those biological female athletes, only for the transgender female athletes that caused them to lose places on women’s teams, awards and medals.

The WNBA must now choose whether to protect the rights of biological female players or “forge ahead” with their “bold transformation plan” to “elevate advance and economically empower underrepresented groups and women.” (Notice how “underrepresented groups,” lesbian, queer, non-binary, transgender are given top billing?) The WNBA describes these actions as a means for “transforming basketball into a platform for *societal change*” and promotes the WNBA Draft as a “vibrant celebration of gender diversity through fashion.” The WNBA also brags that it embraces “multicultural and LGBTQ+ audiences” in order to create “an inclusive fan base” that mirrors “the WNBA’s *values*.”

My advice for the WNBA is that they should come up to speed with what has been going on across the country recently. White, heterosexual men and women are getting sick and tired of being targeted by LGBTQ+ advocates as being white supremacists, racists and bigots. The WNBA stands to lose a significant percentage of fans who have recently discovered the league, if they continue down this path, potentially returning the league to pre-2023 attendance levels. Maybe some players, coaches and owners would like to return to a simpler era where they were able to empower underrepresented groups, celebrate gender diversity and effect societal change in their own *safe space*, without any public debate.