

## **Prodege and Section Z to Unveil Largest Multi-Generational Cross-Sectional Study of Girls' and Women's Participation in Sports at 2024 Corporate Researchers Conference on September 17th**

EL SEGUNDO, Calif., Sep 18, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — Prodege, a leading provider of consumer insights to Fortune 500 brands, and Section Z, a non-profit organization focused on leveraging the excitement of live sports to create opportunities for young women, today announced the release of the largest and most inclusive, multi-generational, cross-sectional study about the impact of playing, watching, and attending live sports on girls and women in America.

The study *“Breaking Barriers: How Sports Set Women Up For Success”* was presented at the 2024 Corporate Researchers Conference on September 17<sup>th</sup> to a large and engaged audience.

Now is a pivotal time for women in sports as highlighted most recently by WNBA stars Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese, and Olympic and world gymnastics champion Simone Biles. The 2024 Summer Olympics was the first time an equal number of women and men competed, and women won more medals. The increasing spotlight on athletes such as Clark, Reese, and Biles, among many others, combined with record-breaking viewership and support for women's sports, is forcing brands to pay attention to the value of this audience. This is driving greater investment, as brands are realizing that this audience is highly engaged.

The Prodege and Section Z report results from a landmark survey of nearly 5,000 girls and women aged 9 to 75. This is the largest sample of American girls and women on the topic. This extensive study is unparalleled in its scale and depth, too, capturing the current attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions on the full realm of sports – playing, watching, and attending live sporting events, adding depth to other recent research on the benefits of fanship. Inspired by The Harvard Study of Adult Development (aka “The Happiness Study”), which aimed to answer the question of what makes us happy in life by following a group for 85 years to examine outcomes, the study design hacked the approach by collecting and analyzing the experiences of Gen Alpha, Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers, now, and in the case of the adults, when they were children.

The study shows the impact of the implementation of Title IX over 50 years ago – as each subsequent generation participated in sports significantly more than the previous. But perhaps the most important elements of the research include a detailed analysis of the benefits girls receive from participating in sports. By comparing girls who participated to girls who did not, we see significantly improved outcomes in socialization, self-perception, mental health, resilience, and career, among others.

The survey also helps us understand the barriers to sports participation still faced by American girls and the significant long-term benefits of overcoming these obstacles.

Here are some selected highlights from the Prodege-Section Z study:

- Girls aged 9-17 who play sports are significantly more likely than girls who don't participate to describe themselves as active, hardworking, a team player, outgoing, determined, and disciplined.
- They are also more optimistic and empowered than girls who don't, being significantly more likely to agree with statements like *I feel like I can make a difference in the world.*

- Data indicate improved socialization and acceptance among girls who play team sports, as well as mental health benefits. They are less likely to say they feel depressed, anxious, nervous, worried, or lonely.
- Importantly, the study shows that the benefits of sports to young girls persist throughout their lifetime, providing critical life skills.
  - More than half of all women agree that sports taught them critical career skills.
  - Women aged 18-75 who played team sports as girls remain significantly more likely to report being healthy, proud of themselves, and happy with their body type and weight.
  - They also report being good at trying again when they fail and working well with others.
- The study examines the power of fandom as well – watching and attending live sporting events.
  - Two in 3 girls agree that seeing a game in person makes them want to play more
  - And 73% of girls agree that *there is a level of excitement going to a game in person that you can't get anywhere else.*
- Despite progress over the years, access is not equal for all.
  - More than 8 in 10 girls say they have barriers preventing them from participating. And girls from low-income households participate at significantly lower levels.
  - The percentage of girls between the ages of 9-17 who participate in NO extracurricular activities is as high as 19% among girls in households that earn less than \$25k and falls to 11% among \$25k-75k households, 7% among \$75k-\$99k households and as low as 3% among those from households earning more than \$100k.
  - But when they can participate, it is just as important to them. About 70% of girls in all income groups agreed their team sport is “very important” to them.

We need to find ways to give more girls access to sports and keep them excited for longer! But how?

"We know girls can only aspire to be what they see. Representation is key. We have to show young women what's possible. Taking them to games and exposing them to a wider range of career opportunities is exactly why I started Section Z," said Section Z founder [Stef Zeh](#). "We see that 93% of our participants want to play longer and get better after seeing women play in person. And by giving them the opportunity to hear from female executives that work in the sports world, they see that the fundamentals of athletics do set them up for success."

Section Z's tagline is "It's more than a ticket," meaning attending a live game has lifelong benefits for girls. Section Z has partnerships with Angel City FC, [most valuable women's sports team in the world](#) as well as AEG, bringing girls to WNBA games, including see the [Los Angeles Sparks](#) play. They also have a partnership with [League One Volleyball](#) which will have its inaugural season starting this January. The game day experience will include workshops and panel discussions, exposing them to opportunities and showing them how great they can be.

Over the last two years, Section Z has:

- Served 1,500+ girls who have attended 44 live sports events.
- Built relationships within 4 leagues, including NWSL, WNBA, [LOVB](#), and X Games.
- Reached student-athletes from more than 30 schools.

- Held workshops, panel discussions, and designed custom curricula.

"We focus on serving those who are otherwise left out. Once you realize the significant life outcomes playing and watching sports provide, it becomes clear that we must work to make this opportunity available to all girls. By breaking down barriers to access and reinforcing their potential we see remarkable outcomes," commented Section Z board member Amy Snow. "The lessons learned through sports serve you throughout your lifetime. I know that from my own experience and this research proves it. We owe it to girls to remove barriers."

"We're thrilled to partner with Section Z on this landmark study of girls and women in sports," said Nicole Zwolinski, Prodege's Senior Director of Marketing. "This ground-breaking survey underscores our commitment to Section Z's critical mission for girls in sports while also highlighting our cutting-edge capabilities in audience research."

Section Z's Zeh and Snow, and Prodege's Senior Director of Client Solutions Susan Stacey will present their findings at 3:55 pm ET on September 17 (Tuesday) at the [2024 Corporate Researchers Conference](#) at the New York Midtown Hilton.

On another note, Prodege continues the fall season's event tour with presentations on Oct 8 at [TMRE 2024 \(The Market Research Event\)](#) in Orlando with Procter & Gamble and Panera Bread. Join us as we continue to innovate and lead the way in delivering top-tier insights that drive impactful business decisions.

Make sure to also check out Prodege's [surprising survey](#) about how Taylor Swift's endorsement of Kamala Harris may, or may not, affect the election.

## **About Section Z**

Section Z was established in 2022 by Stef Zeh for the purpose of providing access and opportunities to girls and young women through sports participation, engagement, and fanship. The organization, which received 501(c)(3) status in June 2023, champions girls by uniquely leveraging sport to inspire and equip young women with the skills, resources, and connections necessary to realize their full potential. We show girls that they belong and are an active part of the sports community, reinforcing that they bring value and are the future. Visit [Section Z](#) to learn more about our mission.

## [Section Z Gameday](#)

## **About Prodege**

Prodege (pro-dé-gée) is a consumer marketing and insights platform fueled by leading loyalty programs that propel brand growth. Prodege empowers marketers to understand, reach, and grow their customer base through market research and performance marketing campaigns that provide valuable customer feedback and engagement. Brands can reach customers in a rewarding environment through positive interactions in one of Prodege's many loyalty programs that cater to their most loyal customers with brand safe offers and surveys that create even greater engagement and enriching brand experiences. Visit [Prodege](#) to learn more about our solutions.

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