

## Fairness in Women's Sports: Connecticut

**Case Name:** Soule v. Connecticut Association of Schools

**Case Status:** On Feb. 12, 2020, Alliance Defending Freedom filed a lawsuit in federal court on behalf of high school track athletes Selina Soule, Chelsea Mitchell, and Alanna Smith.

**Significance:** Allowing males to compete in the girls' category creates an unfair playing field and violates Title IX.



**Background:** Selina Soule, Chelsea Mitchell, and Alanna Smith are elite high school athletes in Connecticut. As dedicated competitors, they have devoted countless days, nights, and weekends to training, striving to shave mere fractions of a second off their race times. They do so hoping for the personal satisfaction of victory, an opportunity to participate in state and regional meets, and a chance to earn a college scholarship. Yet, despite their best efforts, Selina, Chelsea, and Alanna have entered races over the past three years knowing that they and their fellow female competitors have little chance of winning. That's because, since 2017, the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) has allowed males to compete in girls' athletic competitions based on gender identity. As a result, two male athletes identifying as female have dominated the field, winning 15 women's track championship titles since 2017—titles held by nine different Connecticut girls in 2016. Because of the CIAC's policies, girls have lost over 85 opportunities to participate in higher levels of competition, and two males now hold 17 individual women's meet records in Connecticut—records that females have little hope of breaking. Not only does the CIAC's policy—and the endorsement of it by public high schools—create an unfair playing field for female athletes; the policy reverses nearly 50 years of advances for women under Title IX.

On Aug. 7, 2019 the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights agreed to investigate a complaint Alliance Defending Freedom filed on the athletes' behalf, but with time running out on the girls' high school careers, it is now up to the courts to restore a fair playing field in Connecticut.

### Key Points

- Girls deserve the same opportunity as boys to excel and chase their dreams. Allowing boys to compete in girls' sports shatters dreams and steals opportunities.
- Boys will always have physical advantages over girls—that's the reason we have women's sports.
- When schools and society ignore those differences, it's girls who pay the price.

### Key Facts

- In Connecticut, two boys have won 15 women's track championship titles since 2017—titles held by nine different girls in 2016.
- Science and common sense tell us that males are stronger than females. That difference shows up in size, strength, bone density, and even the heart and lungs. No amount of hormone therapy can eliminate all those advantages.
- Girls aren't losing just the opportunity to win, but to earn college scholarships and launch their own careers in athletics, coaching, and more.

**The Bottom Line:** Girls deserve to compete on a level playing field. Forcing female athletes to compete against biological males ignores real differences between the sexes, isn't fair, and destroys their athletic opportunities.

## Connecticut Girls Just Want Fairness

Girls deserve to compete on a level playing field. Unfortunately, these three female athletes are just a small sample of girls who have lost medals, championships, advancement opportunities, publicity, and the thrill of victory due to a discriminatory policy that allows biological males to compete in girls' sports in Connecticut.

Two males now hold 15 women's state championship titles that were once held by nine different girls.

### Selina Soule | Senior | Glastonbury High School



- Pronounced “soul.”
- Missed qualifying for the state championship 55m final and an opportunity to qualify for the New England championship by one spot in 2018-19 season—two spots were taken by males.
- “It’s very frustrating and heartbreaking when us girls are at the start of the race and we already know that these [male] athletes are going to come out and win no matter how hard you try. They took away the spots of deserving girls, athletes ... me being included.”

### Chelsea Mitchell | Senior | Canton High School

- Lost four (4) girls' state championships, two (2) all-New England awards, and countless other awards to male competitors.
- Currently ranked the fastest biological girl in Connecticut in the 55m, but will have little chance of a state championship victory if boys are allowed to compete.
- “I knew that I was the fastest girl here, one of the fastest in the state. I remembered all my training and everything I had been taught on how to maximize my performance ... I thought of all the times that other girls have lost. I could feel the adrenaline in my blood and hope that wafted from me. That just possibly, I could win this. Then, the gun went off. And I lost.”



### Alanna Smith | Sophomore | Danbury High School



- Father, Lee Smith, was inducted into MLB Hall of Fame in 2019.
- Won the 400m at the 2019 outdoor New England Regional Championships as a freshman.
- Ran a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the 200m at the New England Regional Championships, but was dropped to 3<sup>rd</sup> behind a male competitor.
- “Even before I get to the track, I already know that I’m not going to get first place, or maybe even second place ... I know that no matter how hard I work, I won’t be able to have the top spot.”