



# American Women's Track and Field: A History, 1895 Through 1980

*Louise M. Tricard*

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In 1895 the Vassar College Athletic Association ignored the constraints placed on women athletes of that era and held its first-ever womens field day, featuring competition in five track and field events. Soon colleges across the country were offering women the opportunity to compete, and in 1922 the United States selected 22 women to compete in the Womens World Games in Paris. Upon their return, female physical educators severely criticized their efforts, decrying the evils of competition. Wilma Rudolphs triumphant Olympics in 1960 sparked renewed support for womens track and field in the United States. From 1922 to 1960, thousands of women competed, and won many gold medals, with little encouragement or recognition. This reference work provides a history, based on many interviews and meticulous research in primary source documents, of womens track and field, from its beginnings on the lawns of Vassar College in 1895, through 1980, when Title IX began to create a truly level playing field for men and women. The results of Amateur Athletic Union Womens Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Championships since 1923 are given, as well as full coverage of female Olympians.

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