

2017 MOST IMPORTANT MOMENTS IN SPORTS

10 9 8 1,000 DIVISION I WIN CLUB: MOMENTS EIGHT THROUGH TEN



Tara VanDerveer, of Stanford, joined on February 3, 2017.

Sylvia Hatchell of North Carolina, and Geno Auriemma of Connecticut, both hit the mark on December 19, 2017.

2017 ushered in three new members to the coveted Division I 1,000 Win Club, joining Pat Summitt (1,098-208) and Mike Krzyzewski (1,082-330).

Eighteen of Tara VanDerveer's players and assistant have pursued careers in coaching and basketball management, including Jennifer Azzi, pictured with VanDerveer.

Sylvia Hatchell, in her 43rd season overall, is the only college coach to win championship at three levels (N.C.A.A., A.I.A.W., and N.A.I.A.).

Geno Auriemma, coach of 11 national championships, and the two longest winning streaks in college history, achieved the mark with an overall record of 1,000-135.

REAL SPORTS recognizes their achievements collectively for moments eight through ten.

7 Aditi Ashok

Aditi Ashok, the first Indian woman to win a Ladies European Tour (LET) title in 2016, repeated as a LET winner in 2017 by winning the Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies Open. Ashok also earned her Priority List Category 17 status for the 2017 LPGA Tour season. The 19 year-old also qualified for the season-ending CME Group Tour Championship on the LPGA, becoming the first from India to play in the prestigious meet.



6 Minnesota Lynx

Twenty-one years into the league, the WNBA has its second four-time champion with the Minnesota Lynx (the first was the Houston Comets, which won the league's first four titles). Sylvia Fowles was named MVP for the Finals.



5 Serena Williams

Serena Williams continued her winning ways. In 2017, while eight weeks pregnant, Williams claimed her 23rd major singles title by defeating her sister Venus to capture her seventh Australian Open. Williams went the entire tournament without dropping a set.



4 National Women's Hockey League

National Women's Hockey League achieved greater credibility in 2017 with two investment transactions. In October, the New Jersey Devils signed a three-year partnership with the Metropolitan Riveters. In December, Pegula Sports and Entertainment took it a step further and purchased the Buffalo Beauts. Pegula is no newbie to sports ownership; they also own the NHL Sabres, NFL Bills, and National Lacrosse League Bandits. The Pegula's bought a winner, as the Beauts are the reigning 2017 Isobel Cup Champion.

3 Team USA

Women playing ice hockey for Team USA used the IIHF Women's World Championship as the perfect timing vehicle to pressure USA Hockey to address the players concerns over compensation and financial benefits. With the pressure on, Team USA won both battles: livable wages and insurance, and their fourth consecutive world championship beating archrival Canada 3-2 in overtime.



2 UConn Huskies

Mississippi State, coming off a Sweet 16 birth in the 2016 NCAA Tournament, took their game right at UConn in the national semi-finals and came out on top with an overtime buzzer beater shot by Morgan William, the 5'5" Bulldogs junior. The win ended the UConn Huskies record 111-game winning streak.



Norway Men Choose Equality with Women; The USA, Other Countries, and FIFA Do Not

1 In October 2017, it was announced that the Norway Football Association leadership and the men who play for the Norwegian National Team agreed to provide the same financial compensation, regardless of gender, for players representing their country.

While the Norwegian women have consistently outperformed their male counterparts in international competitions, their compensation differential was substantial.

The solution came about in part because of the contribution of 550,000 kroner by the male players from commercial national team appearance fees. The contribution helped increase the female's financial pool to 6 million kroner, from its previous 3.1 million kroner total.



REAL SPORTS editorial board chose this as the #1 Most Important Moment in Sports for 2017 because of the "why wouldn't we pay men and women equally for representing our country" mindset of the Norwegians.

"Norway is a country where equal standing is very important for us, so I think it is good for the country and for the sport," Norway's players' union head Joachim Walltin said (via the BBC and The Washington Post).

In contrast, the USA female players agreed to a new five-year agreement with USA soccer in April 2017 after more than a year of negotiations, which included the U.S. Senate siding with the players and calling for equal pay just prior to the 2016 Olympics.

Despite filing a wage discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, citing female players got paid up to 40 percent less than men and were submitted to challenging working conditions (fields not ready for play, among other issues); the women failed to achieve parity.

The women did though negotiate two years of back pay for unequal per diems and better benefits for players as well as salary and bonus improvements.



SPORTS PERSON OF THE YEAR

- It's been four decades since an American woman has won the New York City Marathon.
- In 2017, Shalane Flanagan did so in two hours, twenty-six minutes and 53 seconds.
- Flanagan, a 36-year-old Olympic medalist, beat three-time defending champion Mary Keitany of Kenya.
- Flanagan holds the American record times in the 3000 meters, 5000 meters and 15K road race.
- She also won the bronze medal at the 2008 Olympics in the 10,000 m (since upgraded to silver).
- REAL SPORTS congratulates Shalane Flanagan on an outstanding performance and reminds readers everyone: Never underestimate the drive and determination of an athlete.

