

2 coaches in Stratford win equal rights case

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Stratford High

Two Stratford coaches recently won a court case involving equal rights as provided by Title IX and other state and federal laws.

Physical education teachers Barbara Hall of Stratford High and Lea Dixon of Bunnell High were awarded more than \$2,700 in back wages plus legal fees.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in almost every school on the country. It protects students and employees in all public schools from day centers to graduate schools and in many private schools as well. Vocational and trade school students are protected by the law too.

The two teachers initiated the lawsuit in 1976 with Susan Merideth, the executive director of the Connecticut Women's Educational and Legal Fund, Inc. serving

as their attorney. They charged that they were being paid less than half of the salaries which coaches of comparable male sports receive. Ms. Hall emphasized that the pay difference was not because they were female coaches, but because they were coaching women's teams.

The settlement said that the school board must pay the same salary for coaching comparable girls' and boys' sports, regardless of sex.

The board also agreed to establish equal terms and conditions of employment for coaches of girls' and boys' sports, including areas such as use of facilities, scheduling, uniforms, use of equipment, and allocation of money and support services.

Furthermore coaches must be hired on the sole basis of qualifications, with no consideration given to the sex of the applicant or to the team which will be coached.

Although Stratford Connecticut's School Board pays equal salaries to men and women coaches, a question of back pay was settled in court last week.

Two coaches from Stratford who filed a sex discrimination suit, claiming they were paid less than half of what the men were paid for coaching three years ago, were granted \$4500 in back pay and legal fees.

U.S. District Court Judge Jon Newman ordered the Stratford Board of Education to pay Lea Dixon \$1571 and Barbara Hall \$1234 in back pay. The judge also ruled the school board must pay \$1700 to the women's lawyers.