

opinion

EDITOR:
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THEBUZZ

Questions asked to you, our readers.

How do you feel about the mask rules at the campus?



"I feel neutral, it's really up to preference and choice. I respect what choices people make and I feel comfortable with being safe."

-Mercedes Hernandez-Natera



"It's good, just make sure you're responsible when keeping it on. Personally, I'll keep wearing masks."

- Lilia Juarez



"I feel OK. I would've preferred an extended week or two after spring break. But I feel OK that it's optional. Our age group is responsible and can make decisions."

- Ricardo Marroquin



Support transgender athletes

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER / TNS

Penn swimmer Lia Thomas looks up at her time after finishing first in the 500-yard freestyle race during the NCAA championships at in Atlanta on March 17.

No room for hate in collegiate athletics

KALEIA LAWRENCE
Editor in Chief

Lia Thomas is the first transgender athlete to win a NCAA Division I title. Her career, which has been met with protests and outrage, has come to a close.

At the 2022 National Swimming Championship, Thomas won the 500 freestyle, taking nine seconds off the former record. In her other two events, the freestyle 200 and 100, she tied for fifth and came in eighth, respectively.

Thomas was able to complete this feat while protesters that stood against her were outside. Even when she was announced, there were some boos. Besides the physical challenge that comes with competing, Thomas had to face incredibly tough mental challenges.

And these challenges came before the whistle was ever blown. This entire season, many who don't usually care about collegiate swimming or college sports in general have been watching Thomas' career like a hawk. Protests all over the nation have been sparked, calling for transgender athletes banned from competition.

But protests came from even closer ranks than people across the country that Thomas might never interact with. Sixteen of her own teammates at Penn State wrote an anonymous letter to the NCAA asking for rules to change so Thomas couldn't compete.

Being a collegiate athlete already comes with challenges: long hours, tough physical work, staying on top of classes and the mental toughness that's needed.

But Thomas faced much, much more than the average athlete. Not only is the country outraged with her existence, but her teammates who are supposed to have her back, wish she weren't working alongside them. It's disgraceful and goes against what being a team is.

But for the hate from Thomas' team, support came from within the swim community as well. Over 300 current and former professional swimmers wrote an open letter in support of Thomas.

One competitor from Yale, Iszac Henig, is a transgender man. He and Thomas both swam with "Let trans kids play" inked on their arms. They were able to face off in the pool because Henig hasn't started hormone therapy yet.

It's unclear what the NCAA will do regarding current rules about transgender athletes. USA Swimming recently changed their policy so that transgender women must be cleared by an independent board to see if there are any advantages for the transgender athlete, though no details on what an advantage implies.

Transgender women should be allowed to compete, no matter the level of play. The argument that "it's not fair to women" is rooted in transphobia.

Transgender women are women. When the argument of it being unfair to women is used, it erases transgender women. They are women. In the case of athletes, they have to undergo a year of hormone therapy to compete. Testosterone levels are also tested multiple times throughout the season and must be at a certain level.

If there are physical "advantages" that people gripe about, then it should apply to cisgender athletes as well.

For example, Michael Phelps is a 28 time Olympic medalist, the majority of them being gold. His body has many physical advantages compared to competitors. He has a six foot seven inch wingspan, even though he stands at six foot four inches. His ankles are double jointed and his body produces half the lactic acid of a typical athlete which causes less fatigue.

Where was the outrage when Phelps was getting medals on top of medals? Where were the protesters shaking their signs saying "protect the fairness of boy sports"? There weren't any because Phelps is a cisgender man.

Clearly, the protests are transphobic. If people were so worried about fairness of play, then there'd be frenzies of protests every time a taller than average athlete was set to compete.

In the case of Thomas, yes, she won a title. But in the other races she competed in, she didn't reach the podium. If she had so many advantages, shouldn't she have medaled in every race?

Thomas isn't the first transgender collegiate athlete, or even the first to swim. Many came before her, and more will come after.

These athletes should be supported. There's no room for hate on the court, in the field or at the pool.

OURVIEW

CLARION EDITORIAL BOARD



Proposed gun rules in Wisconsin are dangerous

TALEISE LAWRENCE
Copy Editor

In January, the state Assembly passed Senate Bill 570, Assembly Bill 518 and Assembly Bill 495. These bills are all related to gun control. Their goals are to allow people with concealed carry licenses on school grounds and in churches, to lower the minimum age for obtaining a concealed carry license and to allow anyone with a concealed carry license from another state to be armed in Wisconsin. Though these bills have passed in the state Assembly, they have not been approved or vetoed by Governor Evers yet.

Madison has a 94% higher crime rate than other Wisconsin cities do. In the span of one year, incidents where shots were fired increased by over 100. Homicides per year went from four to an all-time high of ten, two years in a row. Nationally, gun violence has been on the rise. In 2021, there were 20,726 gun deaths excluding suicides. There were 623 mass shootings, killing 702 people and injuring 2,844 more. On average, at least one child is shot per day in the US. There is clearly an epidemic happening here.

We at the Clarion do not approve of these bills. While guns are not evil, they can be easily misused. Legislation created regarding gun control should either stay the same or become stricter, not less regulated. 18 years old is simply too young to have a gun; that's the average age of a senior in high school. If they are not old enough to drink, gamble or even rent a car, they are not old enough to carry a concealed weapon.

In the future, we hope to see more strict gun control laws proposed. We hope that Governor Evers will veto these bills, and take action like this in the future as well.

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