



# Level Playing Field for All?: Female Political Leadership and Athletics

*Leanne Doherty*

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What makes a candidate viable in the eyes of the voters? What makes someone qualified to run for office? Why do voters tend to opt for certain types of people and not others? How much are such tendencies rooted in broad characteristics-racial or ethnic group, gender, etc.-versus more idiosyncratic traits, those tied to respective candidates' presentation of self? Whatever the broader issues, it is clear that to date, women, when compared to men, have faced greater obstacles to being seen as viable candidates for elected office. A Level Playing Field for All? examines candidates' use of sports in election campaigns as a way to understand broader issues of candidate viability and in particular, the hurdles that women must overcome to achieve political office. This book reveals the extent to which athletic participation has become a social eligibility factor in the success of candidates for elected office. Doherty examines the role participation in athletics played for women looking to run for office. She goes on to appraise the ways in which potential cutbacks and already limited opportunities for women in sports might further affect their opportunities to attain viable candidate status.

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