

Breaking barriers

WOMEN ATHLETES PLAY MAJOR ROLE AT THE OCT. 3 CHICAGO SPORTS SUMMIT

By Lisa Stafford



Paula Faris, ABC News correspondent and former WMAQ Ch. 5 sportscaster

As a former Olympic rhythmic gymnast, Diane Simpson recalls a time when issues involving sexual harassment and the abuse of gymnasts simply weren't discussed.

So in the midst of a cultural revolution spurred by the #MeToo movement, taboo conversations of the past are now becoming commonplace. Simpson is happy to be able to address them during an all-female athlete panel at the Oct. 3 Chicago Sports Summit, to be held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

The panel will be moderated by Paula Faris, an ABC News correspondent and former WMAQ Ch. 5 sportscaster. Panelists include Simpson, who is also the president of the Midwest Chapter of U.S. Olympians and Paralympians; 2018 U.S. Women's Hockey gold medalist Kendall Coyne; Olympic swimmer and 12-time medalist Dara Torres; and Olympic soccer player Lindsay Tarpley. These women have experienced success and broken barriers.

Coyne, who was part of the first U.S. Olympic team to win a gold medal in 20 years, is passionate for equal pay and equal



2018 U.S. Women's Hockey gold medalist Kendall Coyne

rights among Olympic athletes. She has faced skeptics for participating in a sport predominantly thought of as a man's game. But Coyne says overcoming adversity made her gold medal experience more rewarding.

"I think people are starting to listen and realize women in sports are just as talented as men," Coyne said. "We are happy to have a platform to express our views after all these years."

The summit will also include panels featuring 1980 Olympic hockey player and gold medalist Jack O'Callahan; former Chicago Bears running back Matt Forte; and former NFL player and sportscaster Mike Adamle, who will discuss health issues in pro sports, new regulations and how these will affect the future of professional sports.

Chicago Bulls president and COO Michael Reinsdorf, Chicago Fire general manager and president Nelson Rodriguez and Chicago White Sox general manager Rick Hahn will participate in a panel exposing the daily challenges faced on the executive side of the city's professional teams.

The summit will raise money for After School Matters, a non-profit organization offering innovative

extracurricular activities for economically-disadvantaged youth; Girls In the Game, a not-for-profit that encourages girls to discover their strengths and lead with confidence; and cutting-edge orthopedic research for new biologic treatments and injury prevention.

Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush (MOR) will host the event. Athletico Physical Therapy is the title sponsor, and Optimum Nutrition is serving as the gold sponsor.

"The event is a way for our physicians, who treat athletes of all levels, to give back to the Chicago sports community, and help organizations that provide sports programming to economically-disadvantaged youth," said Dr. Brian Cole, summit director and MOR managing partner.

The half-day event will run from 8 a.m. to noon. ■

Companies interested in purchasing a table or sponsorship can call 630-740-6264. Individual tickets are available for \$300. To purchase, visit www.chicagosportssummit.com.



Former Olympic rhythmic gymnast Diane Simpson



Sports summit director and MOR managing partner Dr. Brian Cole



Former Chicago Bears running back Matt Forte