Women athletes treated as second class citizens, literally

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They need as much legroom as the next man. Mr Fooji/Flickr

This morning Sam Lane reported on the front page of the Age that the Australian women’s basketball team flew premium economy to London while the men flew business class. On the one hand, this sounds like a first world problem. As a person who pretty much always travels economy, I’d be happy to travel in either. However that the higher ranked women’s team is being treated systematically differently from the men is interesting. Why would this be the case? I’d argue that this is yet another example of the lack of esteem we have for women’s sport in general. It is part of the larger pattern that places women’s sport below men’s sport in the sporting hierarchy, and the pattern holds regardless of how good the women are. That no one at Basketball Australia thought this was problematic is telling. Treating women’s sport as second class is endemic. And as Lane’s article noted, it’s not just basketball.

Sam has since tweeted that Basketball Australia is overturning their policy. Still I wonder how it is that they needed to be nationally outed as having inequitable policies to make that happen? Treating sportswomen as a second class is so common that it’s practically unquestionable.