



Leveling the Playing Field: Women in Sports

Thursday, February 10, 2022 | 3:30 – 5:00pm, Hawaii

Friday, February 11, 2022 | 10:30am – 12:00pm Tokyo; 2:30 – 4:00pm Auckland

Speaker Biographies



Paige ALMS

2x Women's Surf League Big Wave World Champion and Co-founder, Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing, Haiku, Hawaii, USA [@paigealms](https://www.instagram.com/paigealms)

Paige Alms is a 2x Women's Surf League Big Wave World Champion and co-founder of the Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing, an organization that aims to achieve equality, inclusion, equal access, and equal pay in professional surfing. One of Maui's token women big wave surfers, Paige is a jack-of-all-trades who maintains her competitive career in surfing by working as a ding repairer, house painter, construction worker, surf instructor, and caterer. Born on the island of Victoria B.C. Canada, Paige relocated to Maui, Hawaii when she was 9-years-old and by the age of 15, her first big wave session had her instantly hooked. She was nominated 4 years in a row at the XXL Awards and won "Women's Best Overall Performance" for the 2014-2015 season. She was also featured in the documentary *The Wave I Ride* which debuted at the Maui Film Festival in June 2015.



Anne LIEBERMAN

3x National Champion Muay Thai Fighter and Director of Policy & Programs, Athlete Ally, Brooklyn, New York, USA [@anneliebs](https://www.instagram.com/anneliebs)

Anne Lieberman (they/them) is a social justice strategist, sport policy wonk and lifelong athlete. Currently, they serve as director of policy and programs for Athlete Ally, a nonprofit organization working to dismantle the structures of oppression that isolate, exclude and endanger LGBTQI+ people in sport. Anne has over a decade of experience in advancing LGBTQI+ rights and gender equity globally, including leading grantmaking and advocacy efforts in South and Southeast Asia for American Jewish World Service and two years in Thailand on a Fulbright Fellowship conducting research on gender and sexuality in Muay Thai. Previously, they worked as a researcher for the Bronx African American History Project and was awarded a Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Fellowship. Anne holds an MA in human rights from Columbia University and a BA in African and African American studies and women's studies from Fordham University. Anne is a 3x national champion Muay Thai Fighter, and coach and head of USA Muay Thai's Gender Equality Commission.



Kaoru NAKAYAMA

Secretary General and Founder, Para Can, Chiba, Japan

Kaoru Nakayama is founder and secretary general of Para Can, a nonprofit organization in Japan that leverages the power of sports and serves as a bridge between those with disabilities and those without. Inspired by the Atlanta Paralympics in 1996, Kaoru founded Para Can after graduating from Widener University in Pennsylvania. She has been running the organization for over 10 years. As founder and secretary general, Kaoru travels with para-athletes to nearly 200 schools annually to participate in classes on inclusion. In 2019 alone, Kaoru engaged 26,283 students. Of the many students and athletes she has supported, four have competed in the Paralympics.

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Alyssa NAKKEN

Assistant Coach, San Francisco Giants, San Francisco, California, USA [@SFGiants](#)

Alyssa Nakken embarks on her third season as an assistant coach for the San Francisco Giants in 2022, where she will continue to assist with baserunning and outfield instruction. She began her career with the Giants as a baseball operations intern for the 2014 World Series Champions and in 2015, assisted with the Mission Rock Development initiative before transitioning to Giants Enterprises, where she played an active role in the event logistics, planning, production, marketing, content creation and business development of the Giants’ health and wellness initiatives. She is also chairwoman of the Giants’ first Employee Resource Group — the San Francisco Giants’ women’s network “Momentum,” whose vision is to foster a company culture of genuine appreciation for and commitment to the empowerment of women. Previously, Alyssa served as chief information officer for the University of San Francisco baseball team. She holds a master’s degree in sports management from the University of San Francisco and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from California State University, Sacramento. While attending California State University, Alyssa played first base for the Sacramento State Hornets from 2009-2012. A three-time all-conference selection, four-time Academic All American, four-time Commissioner’s Honor Roll member and the 2012 conference Scholar-Athlete of the Year, Alyssa started 184 games for the Hornets. A career .304 hitter, she ranks among the program’s top six players in six different Div. 1 era categories, including home runs (19). Her 1,265 putouts are the most in school history, and she also ranks third with 115 runs scored.



Melodie ROBINSON

General Manager, Sports and Events, TVNZ and Founder, The Wonderful Group, Auckland, New Zealand [@anicemelodie](#)

Melodie Robinson is a New Zealand sports journalist, commentator and presenter, and a former international rugby player for the New Zealand women's national rugby union team. She played 18 tests for the New Zealand women's team, the Black Ferns, from 1996 to 2002, and won two world cups in that time, playing blindside or openside flanker. She also represented New Zealand in sevens at the Hong Kong 7s and Japan 7s. Melodie currently serves as general manager of sports and events for TVNZ – New Zealand’s national broadcaster, and as representative for the International Players Association on the Rugby World Cup Limited Board. She also recently completed an MBA with her research paper centering on “Why Don’t Corporates Sponsor Women’s Sport When They Are the World’s Most Powerful Consumers,” and she was honored with the David Kirk Award for Services to Rugby.



Kara WINGER

4x Olympic Javelin Thrower and Director of Athlete Services, Parity, Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA [@karathrowsjv](#)

Kara Winger has thrown the javelin professionally since 2009, after a stellar collegiate career as a Purdue University Boilermaker. The Washington state native and Colorado resident is one of the best American women’s javelin throwers in Track and Field history, winning 8 career national championships, continuing a U.S. podium streak of 13 years, competing on 5 World Championships and 4 Olympic Teams, and earning two Pan American Games medals. In her fourth and final Olympic Games – Tokyo 2020 – she was elected USA Track & Field Women’s Team Captain and Team USA’s Closing Ceremony Flag Bearer by her Olympic peers. A mentorship program made available to elite U.S. track and field athletes in 2019 by Evolution of Sports, parent company of Parity, eventually led to Kara’s full-time hire as Parity’s director of athlete services, a role which has transformed in the company’s young life to director of integrated influencer marketing. Parity, an online marketplace designed to direct endorsement funds, NFT opportunities, and more to women athletes exclusively, seeks to close the massive gender pay gap in global sports sponsorship. This intersection of Kara’s athletic and professional career will lead her well into her future beyond sport, as 2022 will be her last season as a javelin thrower. She is eager to continue serving the community of incredible women athletes that she has been a passionate member of for 20 years, and to help build Parity in every way.

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Moderator:



Julia KING

Chairperson, Vanuatu Women in Sports and Changing Faces Seminar Alum, Port Villa, Vanuatu

Julia King is chair of Vanuatu Women in Sports in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Along with her husband, she is also co-owner of two businesses, including the kava export company The Kava House Vanuatu Ltd., and as manager of a local football club. Additionally, Julia is an active member of her community as coach and mentor for women in business in Vanuatu and as chair for the village water supply. In sports, Julia's passion for football started as a high school student in New Zealand and she has fought for women's equal access to sports ever since. She served as manager for the National Women's Football Team when they made history by winning gold in the South Pacific Mini Games in 2017 and that same year, she was elected to represent the Vanuatu Football Federation in the Vanuatu Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee. Julia has also participated in the FIFA Female Leadership Development Program in Zurich and she was recently appointed Chef De Mission for The World Games, scheduled to take place in Birmingham, England in 2022.