

on the hips or the chest" of the female aerobics instructor and viewers "don't even know what they're supposed to do" because the exercised aren't shown entirely.

"The 20-Minute Workout is nothing less than soft porn," says Palmason.

"A women in a tight brief leotard cut up to her waist doesn't fit 95 per cent of the women walking

on the street and misrepresents physically-active women," says the federal sports official.

The skimpy outfits of Olympic figure skaters drew attention from the media with the clothes, or lack thereof, of West Germany's Katarina Witt. Her announced plans to wear a G-string in a medal competition was reported in a Toronto daily. Steele says the article suggested that since most of the judges are male, Witt would get good marks because of her appearance.

"Here they are, focusing on how this woman dresses. It was totally absurd," Steele says. "It was disturbing for me."

The fact that women's Olympic figure skating has been widely reported doesn't surprise Steele. She says sports that are sexy and feminine, like skating and gymnastics, are considered not only appropriate but desirable for women to participate and read about.

But sports like judo and hockey are considered taboo for women and don't get coverage, Steele says.

"Judo is a contact sport and it's very unlady-like."

The media doesn't want to change the status quo and report non-traditional women's

sports, says the federal government's Plamason.

"You certainly don't want to have a picture of a women... that doesn't fit the stereotypical idea of what's appropriate for girls and women in physical activity."

Steele's theory to explain the trend of male-dominated sports pages boils down to sexuality. Men want to read about macho sports to prove their not gay.

"I've never seen an area that is as homophobic as sport," she says.

The media has a job to reflect what its readership wants, but Steele questions whether this is done well.

"Is the media giving the public what the public wants?" she asks. "Why is it in their best interest to reinforce stereotypical roles where women have less power?"

But Fitness and Amateur Sport's Palmason says women want to read about their colleagues athletic accomplishments.

"You have to buy all the right outfits," she says.

Those women who teach classes in health spas are another argument supporting pay equity, Steele says.

"Workers are underpaid and exploited. Their salaries are ridiculous. It's another pink-collar ghetto in terms of it's the men (who own the spas) who are making the decisions," she says.

The male owners make their business a sexy one and use everything they can to subordinate women. Steele says even "the music used by fitness leaders is very violent."

If women are to be encouraged to participate in sports, the incentive won't be coming from the media, says Steele and Palmason.

"The media is an extremely powerful tool," Steele says. "The images that women are seeing for themselves are fitting back into the typical pat-

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"Women are saying, 'Why don't we see the results?'" she says.

Television's portrayal of scantily-clad aerobic women are doing more than objectifying women, according to Steele. TV shows are half-hour long advertisements for a thriving 'capitalist' exercise industry.

terns of male domination in our society."

Women's groups are fighting strong ideas that women's sports are unimportant.

"It's going to take a long time" before coverage of female athletics is side-by-side with that of males, says Palmason. "We can change certain behaviour, but to change the attitudes behind them is the real goal."



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