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NUSEA Howe Cup  
October 30, 2015

### *Run like a girl?*

“Boys are stronger than girls” was the motto the boys in my elementary school class went by, and growing up it was mine too. I never had any reason to think that I was weak compared to any boy but it was a social norm I felt would be too big of a battle to fight. I never thought of the separation of how a girl runs compared to a guy. I just thought we all want to run so we run. I would run with my friends regardless of the stereotype that boys are faster. I would remember the baffled faces from the boys in my class when I would beat one of them in a race. I would feel so satisfied and felt that I could take on anyone. Had they never seen a girl run faster than a boy? Why was it so shocking for them? In society, to “run like a girl” demonstrates the athletic expectation society has on women and uses their gender to justify why they would be athletically inferior compared to a man. For me running like a girl does not carry the stereotype of how a woman should run but rather how fast as an individual can run.

I never gave running a second thought. Although it is present in StreetSquash and in my school it would never prevent me from playing squash. I have never expected myself to be compared to a male athletically. I always viewed myself and other women to do the best that they possibly could. In squash I don't think about me running, as long as I get to the ball. My attention is on the ball and nothing else and when I run I try to keep my mind clear. I don't think about how I run or me being a girl, I'm just a proud squash player.

I see other squash players such as Nicol David and I start to imagine if I would be able to move around the court like that. Seeing what other women squash players can do only makes me want to practice harder and keep on playing. Why would it matter if I were a girl or that I'm good for a girl? I feel that there is no running for a girl but rather run for yourself. I play squash like how Emma plays squash and no one else. I would hate to feel that I need to prove myself to be good just to be compared to a male. Being a woman in squash to me simply means losing myself on court doing something that I love.