



## **iGIANT® Sports Summit**

Virtual - September 28, 2022

### **Discussion Points**

- There is an imbalance between men's and women's athletics, as seen by media coverage and popular perception. Despite being an outdated notion, the fact that male games receive more exposure is related to inherent gender biases where women may not be perceived as “commercially viable.”
- Sports participation varies between women and men across the lifespan. Common issues encountered include adolescent girls dropping out of sports due to strong peer pressure, confidence/self-esteem issues, and lack of access to safe places to play and comfortable/proper-fitting clothing. In the professional world, women are faced with difficult choices such as deciding between their pregnancy or continuing their career.
- In line with the discussion of ill-fitting materials, women are faced with improperly sized bike seats, weights, shoes, and shirts. The capabilities to evolve so that proper fit with a sex/gender lens is present, but few efforts are being made.
- In the area of medicine, prosthetic implants are designed around men. For example, hip replacements were made with men's anatomy in mind, which impairs gait for women. Within the sports industry, male and female athletes possess various structural/ anatomical differences, acutely affecting lower extremities. During women’s athletic games, anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tears are common when compared to their counterparts. This disparity is attributed to females’ relatively less muscle mass around the patella (knee area), which may result in a higher likelihood of tearing if overstretched.
- Women's feet have different proportions compared to men. The former are wider in the forefoot and narrower in the hindfoot for a given foot length. Some companies attempt to address ill-fitting shoes by having more friction in the soles which does not improve shoe fit and may result in higher risk of injury.

## **Calls-to-Action**

- There needs to be a divergence from the binary construct of gender. There remains a question of how we plan to see beyond the binary lens, and how are we considering design for the trans or non-binary athlete/individuals with clinical testing and medical devices. Therefore, personalized approaches are needed in design such as precision innovation that takes into account people across the entire gender spectrum.
- As data drives action, thorough, well-developed research is needed before releasing any products for the target audience.
- It is important to challenge leaders of the industry with the harmful effects of gender bias and make educated decisions with the bias in mind.
- The deleterious effects of gender biases impact people of all ages. There appears to be an emphasis on adolescents and adults, but children are affected by these inherent biases as well. As such, focus must also shift to the younger generations.
- This summit will be followed by other sports summits, challenge competitions, and seals of approval for design processes, all of which will enhance the conversation about the needs of all athletes and the urgency of developing design elements like products, training protocols, policies, and programs to ensure that everyone is provided with the tools, resources, and opportunities to safely perform to their highest potential.