

# **“Sport is a weapon”? Sport, masculinity, and war in Fascist Italy and the implications for women**

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## ABSTRACT / RESUMEN

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The feature article in *La Gazzetta dello Sport*'s yearbook in 1941 entitled “*Sport è un'arma*” emphasises the utility of sport as an instrument of war. The focus of this paper is the inextricable link between sport, masculinity, and war under the Fascist regime and its implications for women. The growth of women's sport and the regime's support of it appears to be in conflict with sport's military and masculine nature during Fascism.

War reinforced the existing masculinity that held militarism as its key element and strengthened its already close relationship with sport. The growing militarisation of sport affected the figure of the woman athlete and her femininity, as well as the sporting world, was redefined to adapt to the conditions of war.

The idea of the Fascist ideal woman had never been fixed or defined in any definite manner, but war made some changes more urgent and highlighted the existing models of the active woman.