



What an honor and a privilege to be here having this conversation with you today. Now before I dive into the whole talk, I feel like I have to preface with a few disclaimers.

- There are brilliant people who have dedicated their entire lives to this conversation, so I am but offering my humble 2 cents
- There's been a lot of controversy and chatter around this topic this year, and I know opinions are strong. This may get uncomfortable for some of us (me included), but please be kind.
- My only goal today is to simply invite everyone to recognize these issues & really strive to become more inclusive of women and girls.

## ABOUT ME

**region**

Sasquatch (Susquehanna)

**member**

June 2015

**board member**

2016—present


**motorsports**

#77, autocross, road race, rallycross

**profession**

marketing





You cannot empower women and girls  
without engaging boys and men.

This is the statement that led me to this presentation. I heard it in a TED talk shortly after the convention last year... In a sport where women are the clear minority, and will likely continue to be given the obvious differences in societal norms, I believe this statement is a clear truth in motorsports.

So, for the sake of this talk, the gaps we're looking at are a few that, from initial research, seem to inhibit the expansion and participation of women in SCCA programs and overall just leave a bad taste in our mouths. Which is to say, once we have the women involved, how can we keep them. And from what I can tell, we have a pretty easy, pretty achievable change that we can all make to move in this direction. And that is, exactly this statement.

So no matter how many rabbit holes I've gone down during my research, and how much more information I'd love to share with everyone... for the sake of this talk, that's where we're focusing.... how the different genders perceive gender inequality in motorsports as it pertains to individual interactions with other enthusiasts, leaders and volunteers at more of a grassroots level, where the majority of women are arguably introduced to the sport. It's as simple and as complex as that.

# gap

*noun*

a difference, often an undesirable one,  
between two views or situations.

Defining what a “gap” is for the sake of this talk, so we’re all operating on the same wavelength.

## ! I'M NOT (REALLY) TALKING ABOUT...

- Ladies vs. Open classes
- W-Series in F1
- Grid Girls
- Women on Track



Now before I go any further, I want to just be really clear because many people, when asked about gender inequalities, immediately started talking about these items. I'm not talking about them... at least not specifically. We're looking at this from a much broader viewpoint.

# **NOT ALL MEN**

(and women are innocent, either)

And one last disclaimer. I am NOT talking about all men.

Misogynists (those who hate women) likely make up 1% of the population.  
Sexists likely make up a small percentage as well (maybe 3-5%).


Even if those three types of men make up only 5% of the population, they impact the involvement of women significantly. We'll take a closer look at that in the next few slides.

We're also going to look at a gap that is one between different kinds of women, so I'm in no way saying that these gaps we have are men-only.

## **SEXISM IN MOTORSPORTS STUDY**

Ok. How many of you took the survey I published a few weeks ago?

- I was intentionally somewhat vague with what I perceived the “gap” to be because I wanted to know where respondents felt there was a gap without too much direction.
- I got a whole lot of insults and, ironically, sexist and misogynistic remarks in those surveys. I think it’s important that you understand what some of those looked like before I go any further, so that’s what the next few slides are.



I've seen your remarks to men on social media.  
You do NOT speak for all of us women.

So this was said by a female. I don't believe she was talking about me at all, as I generally don't engage much online for this reason. I in no way believe I speak for all women.



Tell women to do something  
other than shop, get drunk at the bar  
with girlfriends or watch TV.

I have no comment on this one, but it was said by a man.

This is bulls\*\*t.  
I for one am tired of this feminist crap.  
If you need to beat the men, drive faster.

Commented by a man.

I think you women need to figure it out and  
work hard for it just like us men.  
Why do you think you get a leg up?

Commented by a man. I in no way believe I get a leg up, nor do I want one. I'd even go so far as to say that "us women" generally don't want a leg up at all.

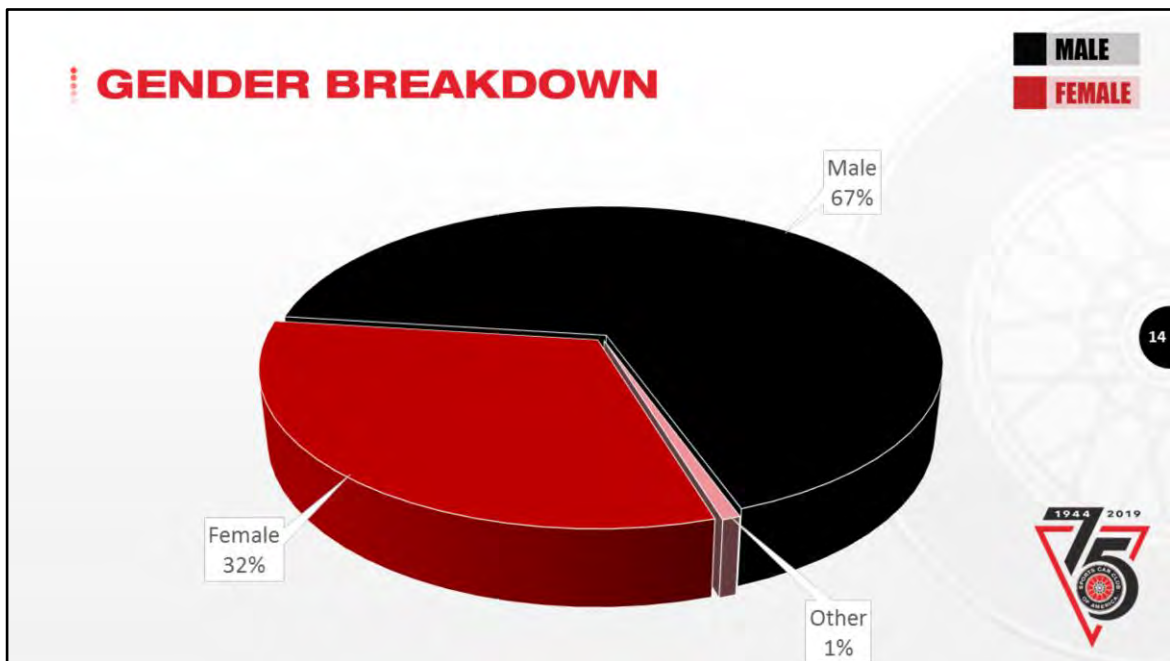
Go to a group where you can  
learn/race/have fun.  
Find this and advance, or  
just complain about how  
unfair life is because you're a female.

I have never once complained about how unfair my life is because I'm a woman. I have, however, demanded respect just as I give respect to others.



You and your sexist survey are the problem,  
you f\*\*\*ing c\*\*t.

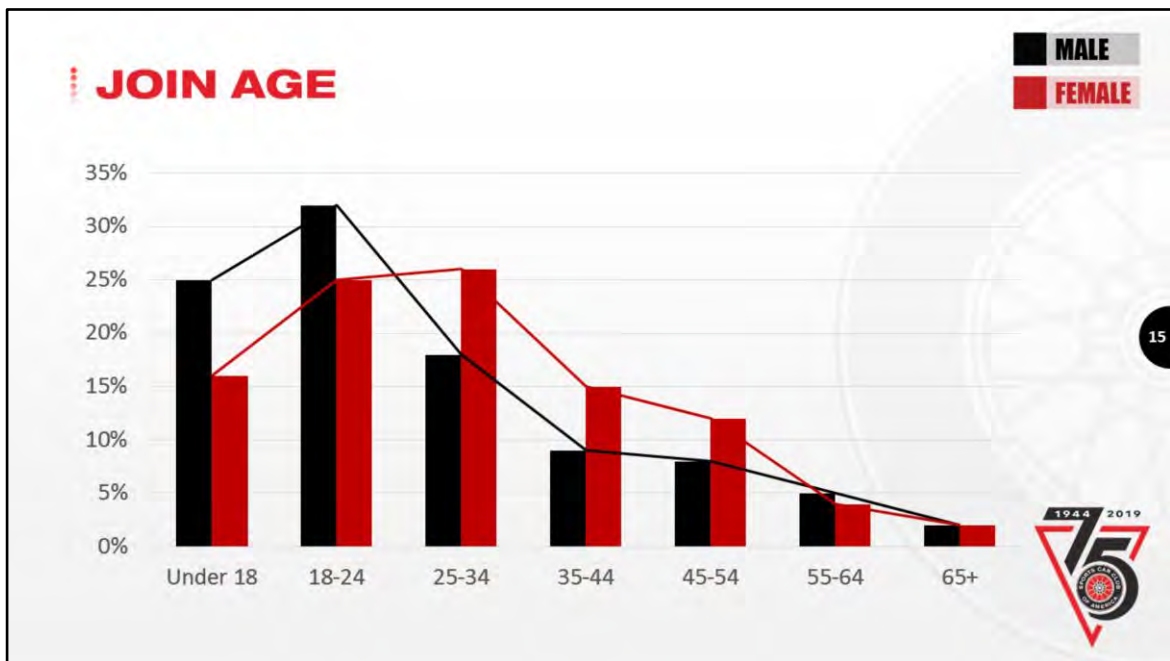
Ironically I can't even read this to you or actually put the words on the screen. This one hurt. This is the kind of comment I got from the 1%... Just for asking questions about sexism.



Ok so here's where we're going to dive into some of the survey results and define the gaps we're talking about.

Total number of survey respondents at time I pulled the data: 1646

- Women: 522
- Men: 1112
- Other: 12

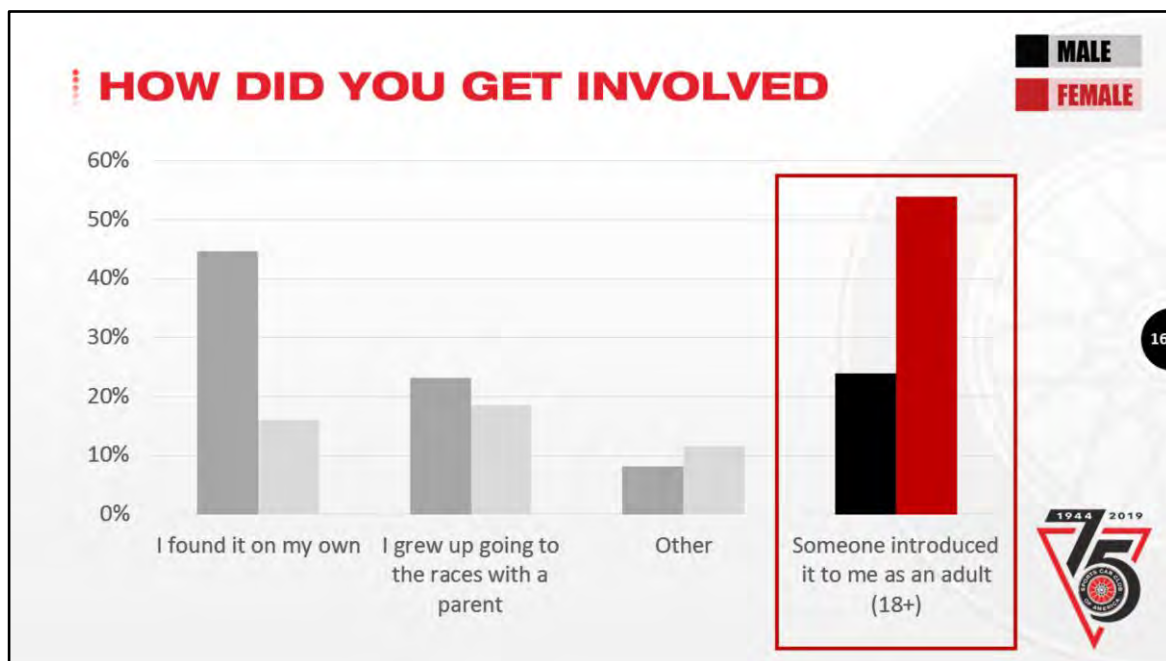


So this is really interesting –

The highest percentage of men join 18-24 and then the percentages drop off drastically.

The highest percentage of women join between the ages of 25-34, but if you look at the trend line, the percentage of women joining as they age is actually higher than the men until ages 55-65.

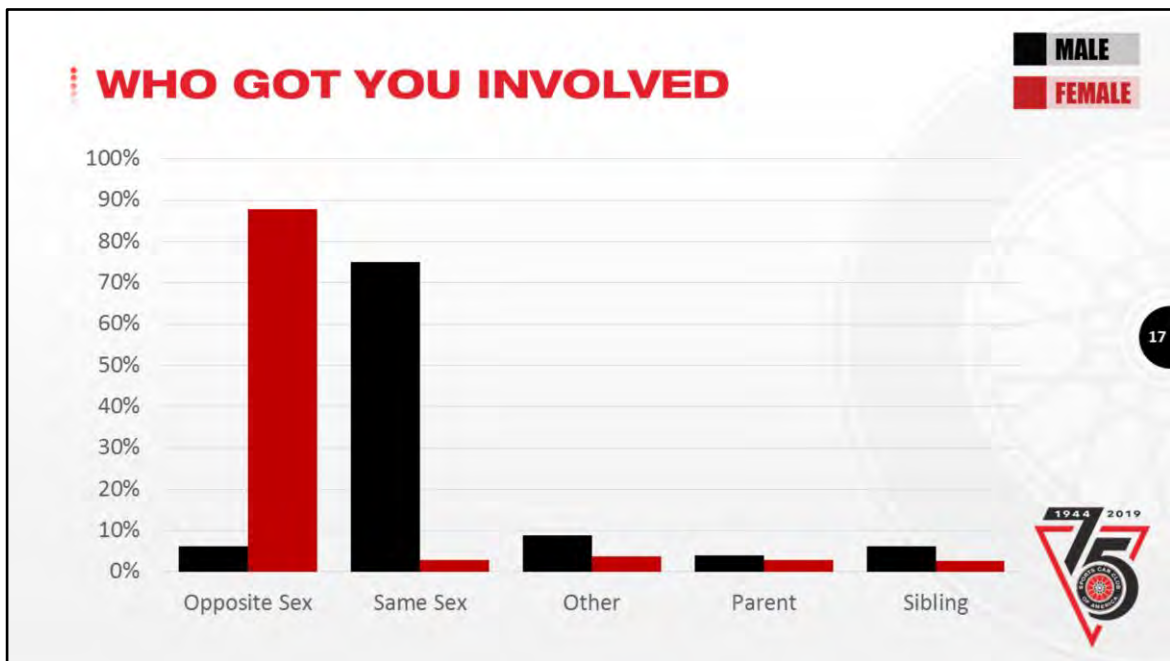
So this is already once difference between the sexes in motorsports, and it's an important one. The next question is... why is this?



If we look at how the sexes get involved...

Most men find it on their own while a whopping 54% of women are introduced to it by someone else as an adult. 24% of men are in that same category.





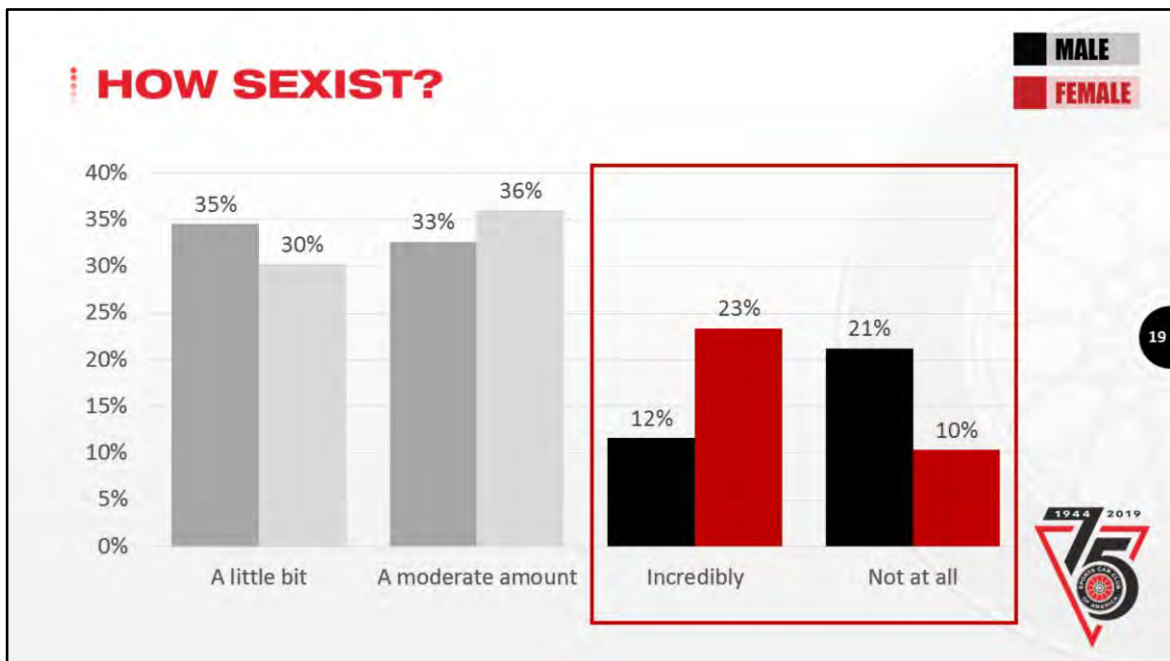
If we drill into that a little bit further, what we'll find tells an important story. Of those people who are introduced to the sport by someone else as an adult, almost 90% of women are introduced by someone of the opposite sex, while 75% of men are introduced to it by someone of the same sex.

That leads us to Gap #1.

## GAP #1

The way men and women are introduced to SCCA,  
and the age the majority are introduced.

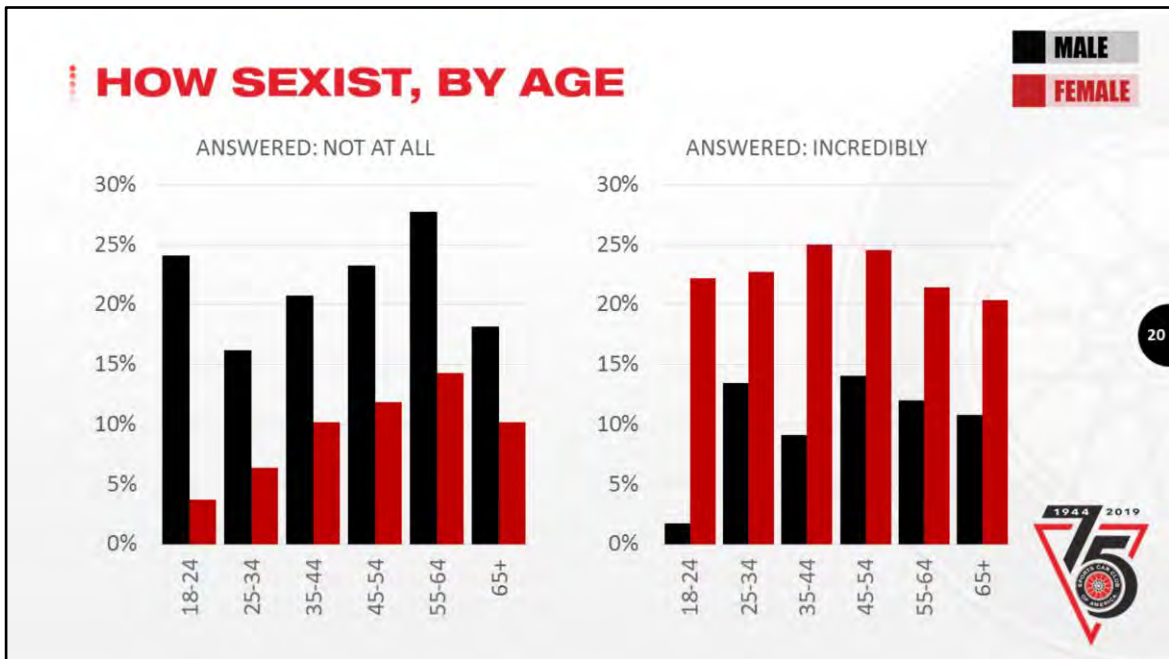
This is a major difference between the sexes, and one that is important when we talk about how to get more women involved. We'll come back to this.



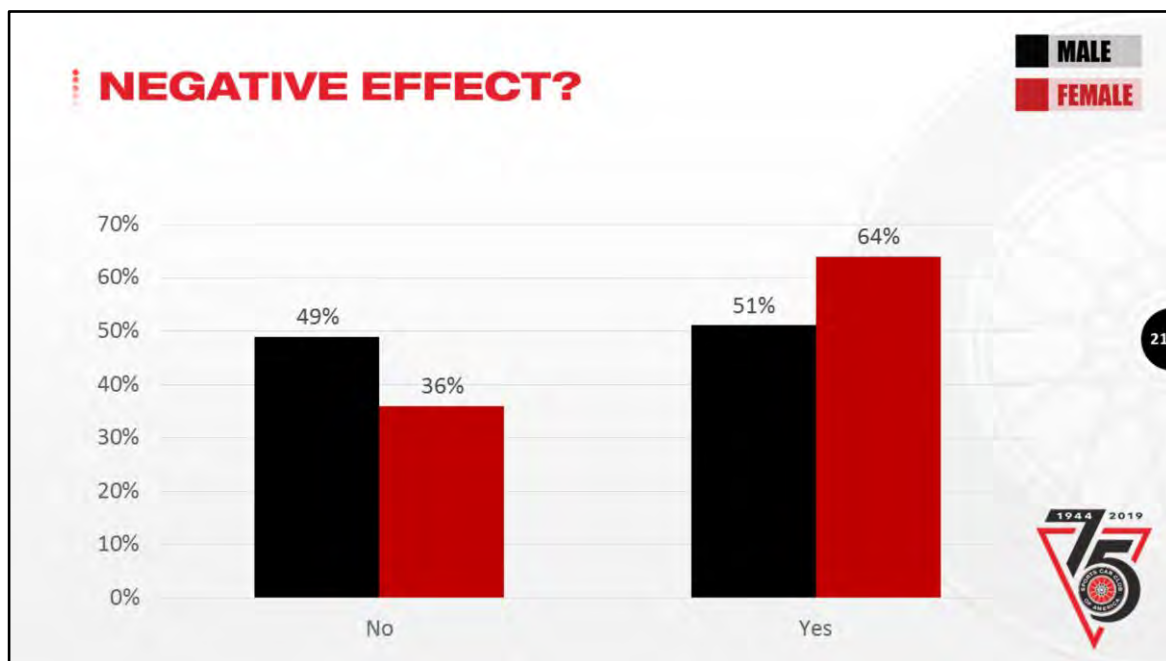
Next, I asked “How Sexist/Gender Inequal do you believe motorsports are?”

If we look at those who answered kind of the mid-ground of this question (“a little bit” and “a moderate amount”) they’re pretty equal across the board between the sexes.

But, if we focus on those who answered at the extremes being “incredibly” and “not at all,” the story is much more varied between the sexes with 23% of women answering “incredibly” and 10% answering “not at all.” There’s a similar spread between the male respondents as well.



If we drill into those two extreme answers a little bit more to look at it across the age groups, we'll see that there isn't a whole lot of variation in percentages between age groups for males or females who answered "Incredibly." The trend for "Not at all" is an interesting one as well.

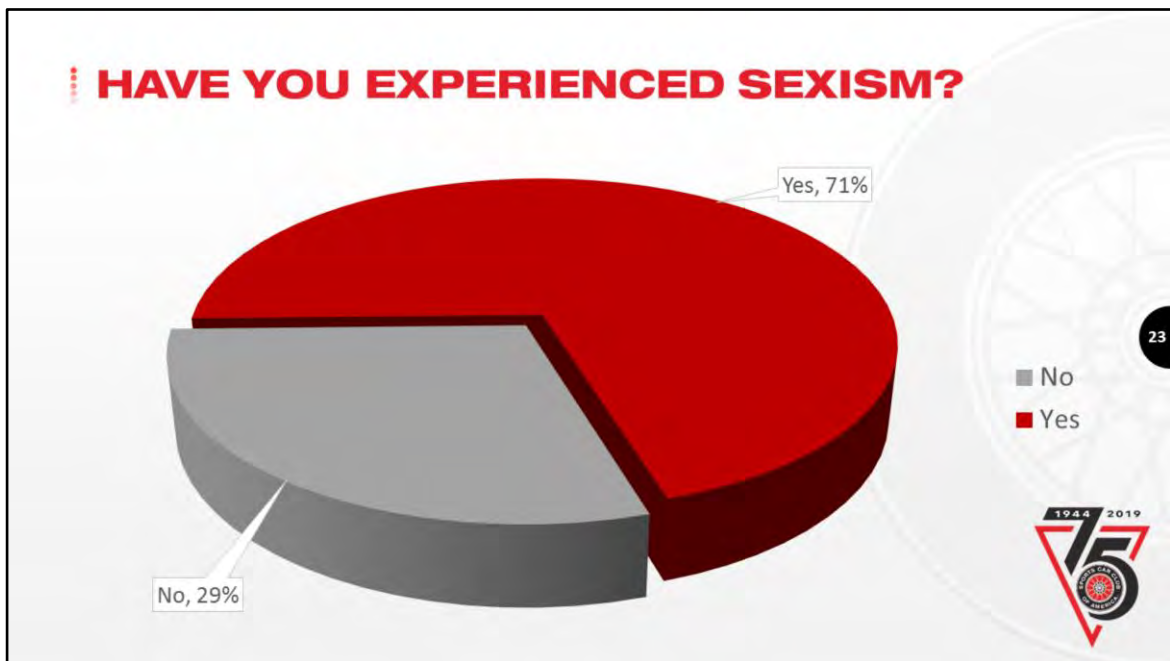


From there, I asked if they felt that sexism/gender inequality had a negative effect on women in motorsports. The male respondents are basically equal between “no” and “yes” on this one. But for the women, 64% answered yes, which is significantly higher percentage than the male respondents.

These statistics lead us to Gap #2.

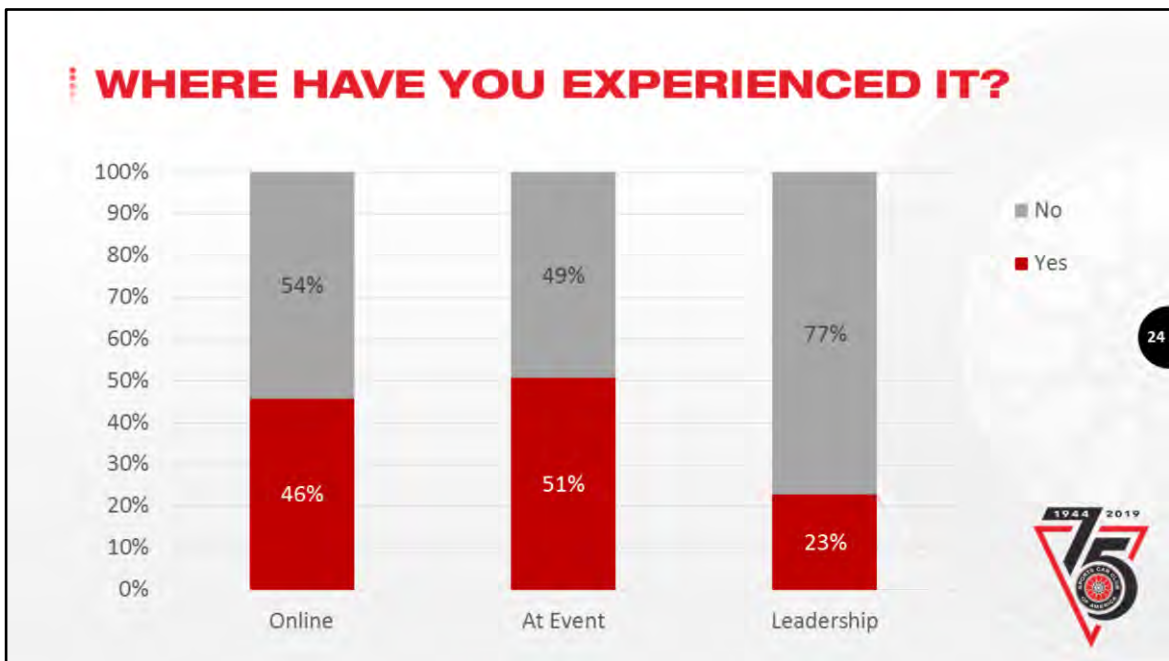
## GAP #2

There is a substantial difference between women and men's perception of gender inequality/sexism in motorsports.



Next, I asked the women only if they had ever experienced sexism/gender inequality in motorsports.

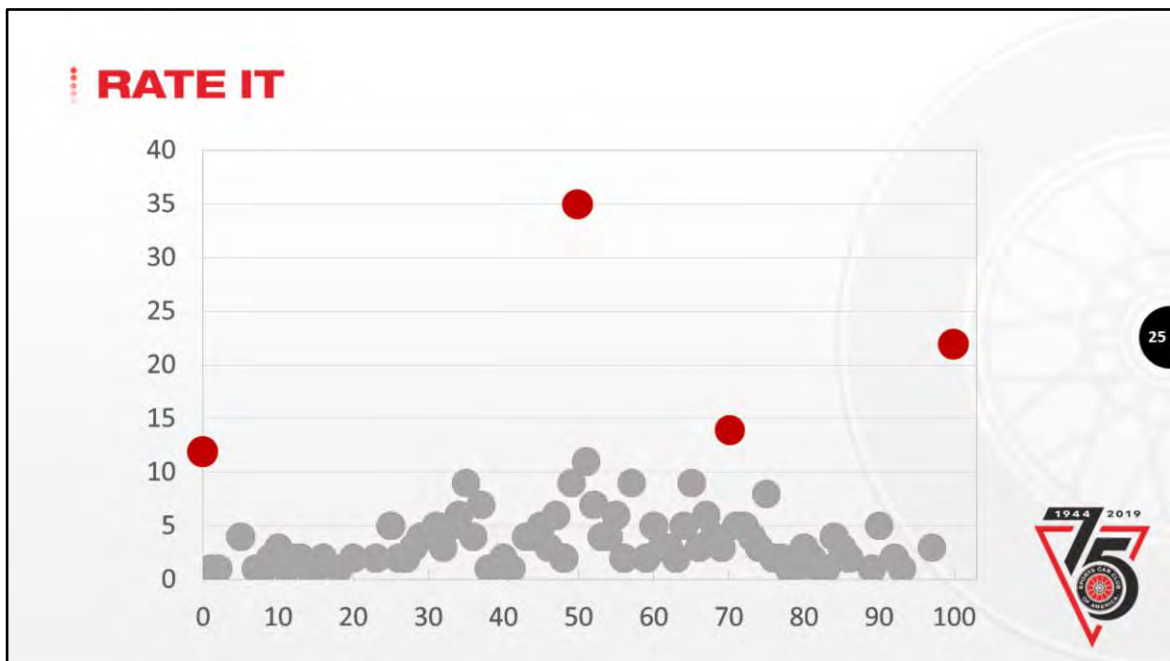
71% said yes.



Of those 71% who HAVE experienced it, I asked where they had experienced it.

Not surprisingly, almost 50% had experienced it online and at events. 23% had experienced it in some sort of leadership role with the club.





And lastly, I asked those women to rate the sexism they experienced on the following scale:

- 0 = I wasn't bothered by it
- 50 = It was irritating.
- 100 = It upset me greatly

Now, if we look at this graphic, we can see clearly that many chose somewhere between 0 and 100. But if we look at those ratings with higher numbers, we see those pop up at 0, 50, 70 and 100.

What this is showing is the difference in the way different types of women feel about the sexism they experienced. Remember, they've identified that they HAVE experienced sexism. So we see those at 0 who aren't bothered by it, and we see high numbers at mid-level and at 100 who were upset with it greatly.

This leads us to Gap #3

## GAP #3

Different personality types perceive experiences differently, creating a gap even within the minority population of women in motorsports.



## **EXAMPLES**

So what does this all really look like, right? Stats are great and all, but what exactly are we talking about.

## EXAMPLES

### GAP #1

Method & age of  
introduction to SCCA

### GAP #2

Perception of gender  
inequality/sexism

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Gap #1: Generally speaking if you join at an earlier age based on family involvement, these types of negative behaviors have less of an impact on you as a female. It's pretty straight forward, but there are plenty of ways that this gap can be bridged to help empower women in this sport. We'll get to that in a minute.

Gap #2 is the big one. This can be anything from what is considered "Casual Sexism" to blatant sexual harassment. (next two slides are this Gap)

## EXAMPLES



### GAP #2

ONLINE: Some of you may recognize this one. It got a lot of backlash. One woman noted about a similar post, “when calling out inappropriate pictures of scantily clad women posted to a Facebook page related to the SCCA, I was personally attacked and subsequently banned from the page for “being too sensitive.”

As one woman noted, “posts on Instagram & Facebook... if women are included in posts, they are heavily objectified and not active participants—instead they are accessories or passive participants.”

## EXAMPLES

### GAP #1

Method & age of  
introduction to SCCA

### GAP #2

Perception of gender  
inequality/sexism

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## GAP #2 EXAMPLES

### From women, some examples:

- One woman was told “no tits in the pits.”
- Another was told to slow down by a direct competitor because it’s not ok for him to be beat by a girl.
- One noted that she was being sexually harassed by a chief of timing and scoring and that that man is still chief for one of the regions. She said they don’t seem to care why he was banned from the other region and that national office doesn’t care at all. (that woman rarely goes to the races now and doesn’t volunteer).
- Another told a story of being told “don’t wander too far off wearing that dress. (Doesn’t attend those region SCCA events)
- One noted constant groping, surprise naked bosses in hotel rooms, belittling talk, mansplaining stuff and being passed over for jobs because “women are too distracting.” Or they’d have to “pay for an extra hotel room since you can’t share with the guys.”
- Another noted that she was told by a steward that “whatever it is you think you’re going to complain about, we don’t want to hear it!” when she went to file a protest.
- Being told “that’s ok, honey... at least you’re pretty.”

- And lastly, one had an organizer hug her and whisper in her ear “I just want to \_\_\_\_\_ you right now.”

#### **From Men:**

- As one man said as an example, “I have seen several women targeted online as sexual objects in photos when doing the exact same thing a man would.”
- Another shared “I routinely witness blatantly sexist social media posts, “memes” and discussions in forums, groups, pages, etc. revolving around motorsports and the car scene, which ultimately affects participation in motorsports.
- Male drivers will race a female driver MUCH harder than another male. I’ve heard several male drivers say “There is no way I was going to lose to a girl.” I have heard a male driver say, “Sure I cut her off. What’s she going to do, cry?”
- In online car communities, I see rampant sexism. Everything from dumb “my wife won’t let me etc” jokes to calling women sluts, looking for attention if they don’t immediately present all qualifications, etc. Meanwhile on one Facebook group I’m in which is specifically for “leftist” car people, and thus holds feminism as a value, there is no sexism, and subsequently a solid 40%-50% of the members are women. This to me is evidence that the main thing preventing women from being part of the car community is bigotry and sexism.

## EXAMPLES

### GAP #1

Method & age of  
introduction to SCCA

### GAP #2

Perception of gender  
inequality/sexism

### GAP #3

Different personality  
types, different  
perception

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### GAP #3 EXAMPLES

When asked if gender inequality or sexism has changed their involvement in motorsports, wide variety of answers.

- Some say it pushes them to try harder.
- Some women gave an emphatic “YES” and noted that they have left or likely will and not come back.
- Some noted that they flat out stopped autocrossing because of it.
- Others said it’s inspired them to be more public about their participation, in hopes of inspiring others.
- And one feels less safe going to events without other people that she knows.
- Still others note that it has made them distrustful and not getting further involved in the club.
- One noted that the online debate of eliminating ladies class turned her off and she quit all motorsports.
- Some said there isn’t a gap. That her male competitors talk smack to her and congratulate her just like they do male competitors. That it’s not sexist, it’s just sports.
- And one woman signs up with a shortened first name which is gender neutral to



avoid the issue altogether.

So some don't have any issue with it. Others take it and turn it into drive, and still others feel uncomfortable enough that they no longer want to participate.

But one woman noted that "some women assume that because they aren't intimidated to race, that no woman would be." That's the heart of this gap – there are different personality types and different ways that women get involved, which lead to different feelings about the sexism they experience.

**ONE SIZE (OR PROGRAM, OR APPROACH) DOES NOT FIT ALL WOMEN.**



## **IDEAS & BRAINSTORM**

**Celebrating our Legacy, Building our Future**

Ok at this point, I want to just say that I absolutely recognize that we have come a LONG way in the inclusion of women in motorsports in the first 75 years of SCCA. This talk would have to be hours if I went through that historical information.

But, in the spirit of this convention — Celebrating Our Legacy, Building Our Future — I want to talk about building our future and further building the welcoming environment that the SCCA is striving for.

So whether you agree or disagree with anything I've presented here today, or bits and pieces of it, know that it's OK. But at the end of the day, the goal of women's initiatives is to bring in more women and then keep them, right? So let's talk now about how we might be able to do that.

## **GAP #1**

*The way men/women are introduced to SCCA, and the age the majority are introduced.*

- Driving clinics for women
- Hold an event where participants are required to bring a female
- Women-only schools (where the men help!)
- Women's groups
- Ladies recruiting ladies
- Have kid-friendly events
- Mechanical workshops for women

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So this is about getting more women in the door. These thoughts and ideas were pulled directly out of survey results, from both men and women, when asked for ideas on how to bridge the gap.

Most of these are self explanatory, but let's run through them.

- Driving clinics for women – South Carolina, North Carolina and a few other regions do this already. South Carolina holds a Chick School where the men come and shag cones... they've seen great success. Get the men involved! Maybe not as instructors, but get them out there showing support.
- Hold an event where participants are required to bring a female – I'm not sure about "required" but think about ways you can reward members for bringing out new females to experience events. Can you give the guy a coupon code so he gets a free event with her entry? How else could this be done?
- Ladies recruiting ladies – if you don't have a woman on your recruiting/membership committee, find one!
- Mechanical workshops for women – think about how men learn about this stuff. They join younger (generally) and they pick things up as they go. When women join at a bit of an older age, we're already behind in that knowledge. Having workshops where tire pressures, torquing, oil changes, or other typical autocross/rallycross

types of car maintenance are covered, you'll immediately make (some of) them more comfortable.

## **GAP #2**

*The substantial difference between women and men's perception of gender inequality/sexism in motorsports.*

- Zero tolerance policy for sexism and misogyny
- Formal reporting process/system for all members
- Women within leadership roles – Ambassador
- Mentorship program for all novices
- See something, say something

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This is about eliminating some individual sexism or gender inequality to keep those women.

Guys, if you take anything away from this talk today... let it be this. We need you to stop sharing toxic memes. We need you to speak up and say "hey, not cool" when somebody says or does something sexist, and we need you to stick to your guns, even if it means you get pushback for speaking up.

Consider creating a formal reporting process/system for your members. Create mentorship programs for ALL novices, not just women... and then ask if the novice prefers a male or a female mentor. Give them the option.

Seriously – zero tolerance policy for sexism and misogyny. Figure out what works in your region, and set this tone. It's important.

### **GAP #3**

*Different personality types perceive experiences differently, creating a gap even within the minority population of women in motorsports.*

- Make it a point to approach everyone, especially females
- Recognize that not all women need the same things
- Construct programs or initiatives that work for different types
- Be kind in the face of opposing opinions

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And this is a call to women, for women. As one female respondent noted, “Getting women to agree to a solution is one of the biggest difficulties I can see. Plenty of men support female drivers, but there’s tons of infighting among the women themselves.”

One male respondent noted that he sat in on the Women on Track session at 2017 Solo Nats and that, in some ways, our most vocal proponents of gender equality seem to be undermining their own cause.

Different initiatives – some will be more comfortable being mentored by a woman than a man, others won’t. Some will want a safe space where they can only talk to women, others don’t agree with that approach. We need to be inclusive of all women and empower them with tools that work for them.

I’ll say it again – empowering and growing women’s involvement in this sport CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED AS A ONE SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH. It’s going to take a village.

# And, Lastly...

## CALLS TO ACTION

Leaders: Recognize these gaps, and build initiatives and leadership around the goal to be more inclusive to everyone, but specifically women as the minority gender.

Women: You belong here. You deserve to be here. You deserve to have fun here. Find (or help shape) the place you belong (be it a women's group, or not), and help others do the same. No matter what, keep showing up and, please, keep telling your stories.

To the real men out there: You are the bridge. Consider this your invitation. Become or grow as an ally to women in motorsports. I for one want you at our table, having these hard conversations, and I know I'm not alone.

And no matter who you are, remember that **silence never solves anything**. So speak up. It's the only way we'll keep growing and shaping the future of the SCCA.

# Thank You!

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