

# Getting women to love football

mardi 26 août 2008, par [Çınar Kiper](#)

**Women have often been overlooked in the field of professional sports, whether as viewers or as athletes. With a recent study, the public is able to see the relationship between Turkish women and Turkish sports for the first time.**

The "Study on the Public's Sports Program Viewing Habits," conducted by the Supreme Council of Radio and Television, or RTÜK, questioned 2,517 people in order to evaluate the public's views toward sports as well as its views towards sports-related programming. The study revealed a general aversion amongst women to both sports and sports programming.

The study reveals that 62.1 percent of women never watched any sports, as opposed to 17.3 percent of men. Also, only 9.2 percent of women either "always" or "mostly" watched sporting events, as opposed to 46.0 percent of men.

The study also revealed that football monopolized sporting programs with 80.6 percent of those questioned preferring viewing football related analysis over any other sport. With football's dominant role in Turkish sports, and the lack of female interest in the field, it is up to the Football Federation to turn the trend around.

## Get them while they are young

President of the Football Federation Mahmut Özgener, during Thursday's meeting revealing the results of the RTÜK study, mentioned that sports programs had become a significant source of tension in the household and that the Football Federation was doing all it could to increase interest in the sport amongst women.

"The Federation is preparing several new projects to not only increase the number of women in the stands, but also to increase nationwide support for women's football amongst a wider national audience," said Özgener.

The Football Federation's Football Development Center Director Ahmet Guvener told the Turkish Daily News that they plan on increasing female involvement with the sport by starting from the bottom up.

"In order to develop female football, we need to start from the bottom up, from the age of six on. We will get nowhere from dealing with the top, nobody wants to be a football player after 18," said Guvener, adding he hopes to accomplish this through quotas.

"We try to force women's football in all our activities by applying reverse-discrimination. For example, if someone is establishing a sports camp, we try to encourage the organizers to have at least 10 percent female participation," he said.

Guvener said by getting women to participate at a younger age, he hoped that parents would apply pressure to the sports clubs to establish women's football teams, adding, "None of the four major clubs outside of Trabzonspor even has a women's football team."

## Fighting negative perceptions

Complaining of the negative myths that keep families from sending their daughters to play football, Guvener said the federation would soon begin a study to evaluate such perceptions.

“We want to find out why families make their daughters play basketball or volleyball instead of football. The results should be available in about six months, and we will be directing our projects accordingly,” he said.

“However many young women we get playing football, whether its 10,000, 20,000 or 50,000 young girls, will actually be changing the profile of the fans in the stands,” said Guvener adding, “Women’s football is not just about changing the face of football, but also about changing society.”

indeed, meanwhile ...

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## **Sources**

Source : TDN, Saturday, August 23, 2008