

In my view November is the worst month weather wise. It rains far too much, gets dark too early and has the first throws of real coldness in the air. It is a dreadful month to play sport in...or rather it is the first horrible month of a winter of dark cold days and nights to play sport in. Roll on the Spring when the thwack of the ball against your thigh doesn't sting for days, your hair doesn't stick to your face while you run through the freezing rain or it is so cold that your lungs hurt when you breath. In fact bring back Summer!

So why the weather rant ? Well in part because the Select Committee this week started its inquiry into women in sport and there are some things that could be done to get more women in sport that Government control, and there are some that they don't; like the weather.

I remember standing shivering on a netball forecourt in a tiny PE skirt with my name embroidered on the front wondering why this form of torture was not subject to various human rights conventions, and I liked sport! So for all those girls today who hate sport subjected to winter weather drills this is enough to turn them off physical activity forever.

This is why we need to ensure that there is more flexibility in our sporting offering at schools, not just for girls because not every boy loves sport, but it is inside activities like dance that will keep girls in particular active. Hearing from witnesses over the course of the next few weeks will help the Committee determine what we think Government should do in the future ranging from flexible activities through to encouraging the media to raise the profile of women's sport and role models.

Unfortunately I don't think banning outdoor sport in November will be one of our recommendations, although I bet there are thousands of girls and women who'd think that would be nice!