



Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants Guidance Document

One in two hundred Canadian adults identify as trans (Individuals who identify as trans are born with unique combinations of gender and sex as a part of their identity) - this equates to 175,000 Canadians. Trans athletes have found the sport community to be exclusionary and discriminatory to those who identify as trans due to strictly enforced binary rules of men and/or women's sports teams. In fact, in a 2014 landmark case, the Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre and a youth ice hockey player negotiated a settlement requiring Hockey Canada to allow all players in Ontario to use locker rooms that match their self-identified gender identity, review and revise its procedures to protect privacy around players' trans status and provide training to all Ontario coaches on gender identity and related discrimination and harassment.

As our society evolves it is necessary that we gain a greater knowledge, as well as understanding, of diverse gender identities and expressions. By doing so, it will allow our society to meaningfully include these individuals in not only sport, but in everyday life. To create a positive environment for trans athletes we must create an inclusive environment which adapts the sport to fit the need of the individual, not isolate an individual who doesn't fit the standard assumptions of gender and sex norms. This document provides recommendations on how to incorporate policies, procedures, and practices that appropriately include trans athletes in our organizations, and in our sport.

Sex is the classification of people as male, female or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth and is based on an assessment of a person's reproductive system, hormones, chromosomes and other physical characteristics.

Gender is the complex relationship between physical traits and one's internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither as well as one's outward presentations and behaviours related to that perception. Gender is not inherently connected to one's physical anatomy.

Gender identity refers to each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person's sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex.

Gender expression refers to how a person publicly presents or expresses their gender. This can include behaviour, chosen name, and outward appearance such as dress, hair, makeup, body language and voice.



Cisgender (adjective) and cisnormativity means that most people are cisgender (not trans), that is, their gender identity is in line with or “matches” the sex they were assigned at birth.

Trans (adjective) is a term that describes people with diverse gender identities and gender expressions that do not conform to stereotypical ideas about what it means to be a girl/woman or boy/man in society. Trans includes people whose gender identity is different from the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, transsexual, cross dressers (adjective) or gender non-conforming (gender diverse or genderqueer).

Transsexual (adjective) refers to a person whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. They may or may not undergo medically supportive treatments, such as hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery or other procedures, to align their bodies with their gender identity.

Transition refers to the process by which a trans individual seeks to achieve consistency with their gender identity. For many, the transition process involves some combination of social transition, hormonal transition and/or surgical transition, but for others it may not.

Principles for Developing Trans Inclusive Sport Policy and Practice

Our objective, as administrators of the sport of soccer, should be that “sport, at its best, balances a series of principles to create a fair, safe, inclusive and open environment for all athletes.” The following are fundamental principles that emphasize the importance for all athletes to have a welcoming and encouraging environment in which they participate in sport, in whichever category they feel best suits their needs:

- Trans athletes should have equal opportunity to participate in sport and strive for excellence.
- Policies governing the participation of trans athletes should nurture fair play, honesty and respect, and preserve the integrity of sport.
- Policies governing the participation of trans athletes should embrace diversity and offer a positive sporting experience, free of discrimination.
- Participation in sport should celebrate differences and focus on the benefits and the joy of sport.
- Policies governing the participation of trans athletes should be evidence-based and recognize the necessity to protect the privacy rights of the athletes and strive to prevent physical, emotional and mental harm.
- Policies governing the participation of trans athletes should foster access and equitable participation for all participants.
- Practices that encourage understanding and support of trans athletes need to be enhanced to acknowledge the challenges and recognize the value of advocating for sport that is fair, safe and open to everyone.



Creating Trans Inclusive Policies and Practices

We, as soccer administrators, want to create more inclusive sport environments for all of our athletes, including trans athletes. To do so, we should start by framing policies and practices from an inclusion-first perspective. We must consider eligibility criteria (which sometimes gives off a feeling of keeping people out of sport), as well as on practices which encourage all individuals to participate in sport without feeling unwelcome. By implementing best practices, we can demonstrate that we are prepared to support everyone in having a positive sport experience.

Policy Recommendations for Implementation

1. Athletes participating in soccer in the Long Term Player Development stages of Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learn to Train, Train to Train and Train to Compete (until FIFA regulations become relevant), together with Active for Life, **will** be able to participate in the gender with which they identify, and not be subjected to disclosure of personal information beyond those required of cisgender athletes. Nor should there be any requirement for hormonal therapy or surgery.
2. Athletes **will** be recognized and acknowledged by their preferred name and gender markers.
3. Gender identity and gender expression will be added to the Code of Conduct as items which may not be discriminated against.
4. Hormone therapy **will not** be required for an individual to participate in soccer until such a time that they are involved in high performance sport within the Long Term Player Development stages that are Train to Compete (where FIFA regulations become relevant) and Train to Win. Those organizations wanting to implement this eligibility clause would have to provide evidence that this requirement is reasonable and bona fide.
5. Individuals **will not** be required to disclose their trans identity or history to participate in soccer until such a time that they are involved in high-performance sport within the Long Term Player Development stages that are Train to Compete (where FIFA regulations become relevant) and Train to Win, unless there is justified reason requiring them to do so. Those organizations engaging in high-performance sport and wanting to implement this eligibility clause would have to provide a safe, transparent process by which trans athletes are able to disclose their trans identity or history to the organization.
6. Individuals **will not** be required an individual to undergo surgery in order to participate in soccer for any reason. Any suggestion from a sport organization, or individual associated with that organization, that an individual should pursue gender-affirming surgery would risk violating human rights law and may be considered a significant form of discrimination.



Policy Rationale

It is a human right to be recognized as the gender with which one identifies. As well, there is no rationale for these athletes to disclose an individual's personal medical information if not voluntarily self-declared. Member Organizations needs to be diligent in protecting the privacy of all athletes.

In considering the sport of soccer, soccer does not currently regulate other participants based on their size, strength or weight to ensure safety (that is, a cisgender female player would not be prohibited from playing just because she was a foot taller than everyone else in the league) and, therefore, a sport should not do so for trans participants.

Currently, there is a lack of scientific evidence that directly connects endogenous hormone levels with athletic performance. Encouraging a trans individual to consider, or be pressured to consider, delaying the use of hormone therapy in order to realize some perceived or real competitive advantage in their sport, may decrease the personal and physiological benefit of hormone therapy for the athlete, and is considered extremely unethical and potentially damaging to an individual's long-term well-being.

Best Practices for Building a Positive Environment

The following are best practices for building a positive environment within a Member Organization.

Best Practices for Positive Verbal and Emotional Environment

- 1. Ensure that key organizational documents proactively state the Member Organization's intention to be inclusive.** Include bylaws, strategic frameworks (vision, mission and values), policies relating to ethics and conduct (including prohibited grounds for discrimination), employment policies and employment agreements, policies governing athletes and coaches, including athlete agreements, and other orientation materials.
- 2. Enquire about and respect an individual's right to determine their preferred name and gender markers.** All individuals have the right to be addressed by their chosen name and to choose pronouns that align with their gender identity and/or gender expression. This is true whether or not the individual has obtained legal documentation of a change of name or gender designation.
- 3. Ensure that information gathered from all participants is necessary and appropriate. Avoid seeking information, unless it is truly relevant, that might unwittingly oblige individuals to divulge personal information.** Ensure that the questions asked of participants are truly necessary, especially if the questions could reveal someone's trans identity (that is, before asking about legal name, gender or medical information, ensure it is a legitimate and necessary request). If a legal name is necessary, ask for it as well as the name by which they prefer to be called.
- 4. Maintain information and records in a way that respects an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality.** Ensure that administrative processes are organized to be able to change a



participant's name and gender when needed, and protect an individual's trans status. No information should be given out concerning someone's gender identity or stage of transition status, without the individual's express consent.

- 5. Ensure all written materials and websites use inclusive language and images.** Organizations should ensure that all written and online materials demonstrate their commitment to trans inclusion.
- 6. Have clear and documented organizational processes in place that respond to participants' individual needs.** There should be discrete and informed processes to assist athletes at various stages of transition. Individuals have different needs, and the support that works for one person may not work for another. Organizations should ensure that organizational supports are available and tailored and adapted to the individual needs of participants.
- 7. Provide learning opportunities that build the capacity of staff, volunteers, participants and spectators to understand and support diverse gender identities and gender expressions.**

Best Practices for Positive Physical Environment for All

- 1. Providing safe access to washrooms and change-room facilities.** Facilities should provide gender neutral bathroom and dressing room facilities to avoid individuals or teams having to make special requests and thereby risk exposing a trans athlete. All environments should be safe and inclusive.
- 2. Ensure uniforms and dress codes respect an individual's gender identity and gender expression.** A flexible and gender-inclusive uniform or dress code recognizes that all participants have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression.
- 3. Avoid forms that capture unnecessary information, such as declaration of gender, and ensure that when such information is required that categories be inclusive.** When creating forms, consider whether information about gender is critically important to the service being provided. It is important for organizations to consider why they are asking for this information, be it for entry categorization or for demographic or reporting purposes.

Concluding Thoughts

Saskatchewan Soccer Association encourages its membership to be proactive in helping to guide trans athletes through the sport of soccer, and to take steps to ensure that Member Organizations are inclusive and welcoming to everyone.

For more information, please consult the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport *Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport: Guidance for Sport Organizations* at:

<http://cces.ca/gender-inclusivity>



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