

2021

TRANS PARTICIPATION POLICYMAKING: DOS AND DON'TS

THE
INCLUSION
PLAYBOOK



Creating an inclusive participation policy is a crucial part of making your sport accessible to transgender athletes. While there's no one-size-fits-all policy, below are some general guidelines for creating an appropriate, effective participation policy that is inclusive, thoughtful, and respectful of transgender, nonbinary, and gender expansive athletes.

Do

Reach out to transgender athletes and organizations who work at the intersection of transgender inclusion and athletics for information and resources to guide you in your policymaking.

Consider the level of regulation in your policy in light of the level of sport and age of athletes who would be impacted by it. For example, the policy that might apply to Olympic-level competition is likely different from the context of a youth recreational league.

Respect athlete confidentiality. Prohibit public disclosure of any information related to an athlete being transgender and do not force athletes to share their transgender identity publicly in order to compete.

Do your research, and be aware that some researchers advance inaccurate conclusions about transgender athletic participation that contradict leading medical expertise.

Avoid using language that perpetuates stereotypes of transgender people or minimizes the discrimination transgender people experience in many aspects of their lives.

Include specific language in your policy regarding the inclusion of nonbinary athletes. Be aware that some nonbinary athletes utilize transgender participation policies as a resource to guide their participation on binary (men's/women's) sports teams.

Plan to review and update your policy as needed in light of future relevant developments in science and medicine.

Review federal, state, and local laws to ensure that your policy reflects the most up-to-date nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ individuals.

Don't

- ✗ Do not directly or indirectly ban transgender athletes from participating in sports and competing as full members of the team.
- ✗ Do not just copy a policy from another sporting organization without reviewing whether it applies. Policies are best when considered in line with your context, and then tailored to your specific sport, membership, and levels of play.
- ✗ Do not require athletes to “prove” their gender based on stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity or through invasive testing.
- ✗ Do not allow fear, stereotypes, or misinformation about transgender athletes to drive your policy-making.
- ✗ Do not require particular medical procedures such as any particular gender affirming surgeries in order to participate or play.
- ✗ Do not talk about transgender athletes as a “hot topic” or “new to sports.” While more transgender people are now sharing their identities more publicly, they are not new to sports and their identities should not be the subject of debate.
- ✗ Do not allow athletes, coaches, officials, staff, parents, fans, or other stakeholders to “challenge” an athlete's gender or the team that they are participating on.