**GOALBALL UK**

**POLICY ON THE INCLUSION OF TRANS PEOPLE IN GOALBALL**

**Last Updated: JANUARY 2021**

NEXT REVIEW: JANUARY 2022

# INTRODUCTION AND PRINCIPLES

* 1. Goalball UK is fully committed to the principles *and practice* of equality of opportunity. This includes the opportunity of trans people to participate in Goalball as players, coaches and other volunteering roles. The Goalball UK Equality and Diversity Policy applies generally to all players, volunteers, employees and others involved in the work of Goalball UK; this specific policy is intended to set out clearly Goalball UK’s position on the inclusion of trans athletes, coaches and other volunteers in the sport.

* 1. Underpinning this policy are two commitments which Goalball UK makes to all its participants:
* As the National Governing Body for the sport, we are committed to the full participation of trans athletes, coaches and other volunteers in domestic competitions which we organise or oversee, and
* As the body which prepares the national representative teams for Paralympic and other international competitions, we will, as far as we can, support trans athletes, within the parameters set by the International Blind Sports Association (IBSA), the British Paralympic Association (BPA), and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).
  1. This policy has been created within the legal and regulatory context of:
* Gender Recognition Act 2004
* Equality Act 2010
* The IOC consensus Statement Nov 2015

It will be reviewed and kept up to date in the light of any relevant changes.

* 1. At the time of adoption of this policy, National Governing Bodies are awaiting guidance from Sport England on the inclusion of trans athletes. SE have issued this holding position: https://www.sportengland.org/corporate-information/equality-and-diversity/Transgender-inclusion-grassroots-sport-and-physical Once such guidance is available, Goalball UK will review its policies in light of it and make any changes deemed suitable.

* 1. Goalball UK recognises that excluding trans people from participating in sporting events and activities has significant implications for their health, well-being and involvement in community life. Where it has ultimate authority over a competition or event, Goalball UK will ensure that trans people are able to participate in the sport in their stated gender
  2. Goalball UK is committed to providing a safe, fair and inclusive sporting environment where people of all backgrounds can contribute and participate. People who identify as trans should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect at all times. This includes acting with sensitivity when a person is receiving medical or psychological treatment.
  3. Section 2 of this policy applies to athletes competing in domestic competitions. Section 3 applies to athletes competing or training for international competition. Section 4 relates to all athletes, coaches, volunteers and staff involved in the activities of Goalball UK as a national governing body.

*Terminology and Glossary*

* 1. This policy uses the term “trans”. The term is used in the way described by Stonewall as:

“An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.  
Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman,trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.”

The full Stonewall glossary can be found here: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faqs-and-glossary/glossary-terms>

The policy also uses the initials for sporting bodies set out in section 1.2.

# DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS

* 1. In domestic competitions, an individual player’s participation at Novice, Intermediate or Elite level is assessed by playing ability. The over-arching principle is to ensure that players participate at a level at which both they and those on court with them are physically safe to do so.
  2. An individual is deemed as belonging to the gender in which they identify rather than the gender they were assigned at birth'
  3. As well as club competitions, these principles will apply to competitions involving teams representing England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales where there are no teams representing countries outside the UK. These competitions will be considered “domestic” for the purposes of this policy. Competitive encounters involving any of the four UK countries against non-UK national teams are covered by the provisions in section 3 below.

# INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

* 1. At the time this policy was published, neither IBSA nor IPC have issued their own guidance on the participation of trans athletes. The only official international statement on the issue is that of the IOC. This is set out in Appendix A.
  2. Consultation and data gathering, with a view to creating guidelines and structures within which sports bodies can develop their own policies are ongoing. The Goalball UK policy will be kept under review in light of any changes to existing positions or new guidance.
  3. Goalball UK’s position is that an athlete 16 and over should be eligible to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland (or one of the four constituent nations of the United Kingdom) in international competitions in their stated gender identity. Goalball UK will support athletes to do so within any policy set by the IOC, IPC or IBSA that applies at the time.

* 1. For athletes under 16, such representation will require a case by case assessment by Goalball UK through the Performance and Talent Group and the considerations that apply to all athletes under 16.

* 1. Goalball UK has a talent pathway which develops athletes for international competition. As part of its support and guidance to all athletes on this pathway, it will work with individual Trans athletes as they prepare for international competition to ensure a full understanding of any IBSA or IPC requirements.

# GENERAL ISSUES APPLICABLE TO ALL CASES

* 1. Goalball UK will not tolerate any discrimination, harassment or bullying of a person who identifies as trans or who is thought to be trans. If a trans person feels they have been harassed or discriminated against by another person or organisation bound by this Policy, they may make a complaint. Goalball UK may also instigate a matter. The process will be set out within Goalball UK’s disciplinary rules applicable at the time of the matter.

* 1. As well as the statutory definitions of discrimination, examples of things that amount to harassment or bullying are:
* refusing to use someone’s proper pronouns
* spreading gossip about someone’s trans history
* insulting someone based on their gender identity and gender expression
  1. Goalball UK holds its competitions and events at third party venues. Goalball UK will make every effort to use venues with consistent policies about use of facilities. Goalball UK will make information available about venues as part of its pre-tournament packs. Clubs and athletes, coaches and volunteers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with a venue’s own policies as well as this document.

* 1. Gender identity and recognition are sensitive matters and any persons involved in any case dealt with under this policy will respect the confidentiality of the matter and the individual’s right to privacy. All documentation containing information about a person’s past or present gender Transition will be managed in accordance with Goalball UK policies on information handling and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, the equality Act 2010 and the Gender Recognition Act 2004. Special attention is drawn to the fact that, as well as standard Data Protection requirements, the law also provides extra protections about a person’s gender recognition, which includes criminal sanctions for disclosing specific types of information.
  2. Gender recognition achieved under any laws operating in the jurisdiction in which the athlete obtained this recognition will be accepted by Goalball UK. Goalball UK recognises that the legal requirements for obtaining gender recognition is a devolved matter in the UK – the Scottish Parliament has the right to make different provisions for how a person achieves recognition of their gender than apply in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. Goalball UK will not concern itself with these differences, nor with any differences in procedure applicable in a country outside the UK.

# APPENDIX A

**IOC Consensus Meeting on Sex Reassignment and Hyperandrogenism November 2015 Participants:**

Prof Dr Uğur Erdener - Chairman, IOC Medical & Scientific Commission

Prof Arne Ljungqvist - Former Chairman, IOC Medical Commission

Dr Stéphane Bermon - Monaco Institute of Sports Medicine & Surgery, IAAF Medical & Scientific Senior Consultant

Michael Beloff - QC Barrister, Blackstone Chambers

Prof Gerard Conway - Professor of Clinical Medicine, University College London

Prof Myron Genel - Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics and Senior Research Scientist, Yale Child Health Research Center Yale University School of Medicine

Ms Joanna Harper - Chief Medical Physicist, Radiation Oncology, Providence Portland Medical Center

Prof Angelica Linden Hirschberg - Department of Woman & Child Health, Division of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Karolinska Institutet

Prof Dr Maria Jose Martinez Patino - Faculty of Sport Sciences, University of Vigo

Prof Martin Ritzén - Professor Emeritus, Dept of Woman and Child Health Karolinska Institutet

Dr Eric Vilain - Professor of Human Genetics, Pediatrics and Urology Director, Center for Gender-Based Biology Chief, Medical Genetics, Department of Pediatrics Co-director, Clinical Genomic Center David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

Jonathan Taylor - Partner, Bird & Bird

Liz Riley - Barrister, Bird & Bird

Dr Robin Mitchell - Vice-Chair, IOC Medical & Scientific Commission

Dr Rania Elwani - Member, IOC Medical & Scientific Commission

Dr Vidya Mohamed-Ali - Member, IOC Medical & Scientific Commission

Prof Yannis Pitsiladis - Member, IOC Medical & Scientific Commission

Dr Richard Budgett - IOC Medical & Scientific Director

Dr Lars Engebretsen - IOC Head of Scientific Activities

Christian Thill - IOC Senior Legal Counsel

1. **Transgender guidelines**
2. Since the 2003 Stockholm Consensus on Sex Reassignment in Sports, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of autonomy of gender identity in society, as reflected in the laws of many jurisdictions worldwide.
3. There are also, however, jurisdictions where autonomy of gender identity is not recognised in law at all.
4. It is necessary to ensure insofar as possible that trans athletes are not excluded from the opportunity to participate in sporting competition.
5. The overriding sporting objective is and remains the guarantee of fair competition. Restrictions on participation are appropriate to the extent that they are necessary and proportionate to the achievement of that objective.
6. To require surgical anatomical changes as a pre-condition to participation is not necessary to preserve fair competition and may be inconsistent with developing legislation and notions of human rights.
7. Nothing in these guidelines is intended to undermine in any way the requirement to comply with the World Anti-Doping Code and the WADA International Standards.
8. These guidelines are a living document and will be subject to review in light of any scientific or medical developments.

In this spirit, the IOC Consensus Meeting agreed the following guidelines to be taken into account by sports organisations when determining eligibility to compete in male and female competition:

1. Those who transition from female to male are eligible to compete in the male category without restriction.
2. Those who transition from male to female are eligible to compete in the female category under the following conditions:

2.1 The athlete has declared that her gender identity is female. The declaration cannot be changed, for sporting purposes, for a minimum of four years.

2.2 The athlete must demonstrate that her total testosterone level in serum has been below 10 nmol/L for at least 12 months prior to her first competition (with the requirement for any longer period to be based on a confidential case-by-case evaluation, considering whether or not 12 months is a sufficient length of time to minimize any advantage in women’s competition).

2.3 The athlete's total testosterone level in serum must remain below 10 nmol/L throughout the period of desired eligibility to compete in the female category.

2.4 Compliance with these conditions may be monitored by testing. In the event of non-compliance, the athlete’s eligibility for female competition will be suspended for 12 months.

1. **Hyperandrogenism in female athletes**

In response to the interim award dated 24 July 2015 in Chand v AFI and IAAF CAS 2014/A/3759, the IOC Consensus Meeting recommended:

* Rules should be in place for the protection of women in sport and the promotion of the principles of fair competition.
* The IAAF, with support from other International Federations, National Olympic Committees and other sports organisations, is encouraged to revert to CAS with arguments and evidence to support the reinstatement of its hyperandrogenism rules.
* To avoid discrimination, if not eligible for female competition the athlete should be eligible to compete in male competition.

This PDF version of the 2015 IOC Consensus document can be found here: [2015-11\_ioc\_consensus\_meeting\_on\_sex\_reassignment\_and\_hyperandrogenism-en.pdf (olympic.org)](https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/Commissions_PDFfiles/Medical_commission/2015-11_ioc_consensus_meeting_on_sex_reassignment_and_hyperandrogenism-en.pdf)