



USA Gymnastics Policy for Transgender Inclusion Adopted July, 2015

Introduction/Purpose

USA Gymnastics supports diversity and inclusion in all aspect of gymnastics, and promotes programs that offer new and unique opportunities to participate in the sport.

Few policies exist within youth sports organizations that govern the inclusion of transgender athletes. USA Gymnastics has developed this policy in a proactive effort to help guide and support members of the gymnastics community.

The goal of this policy is to provide transgender athletes an avenue to participate in competitive gymnastics, and to do so in a fair manner. This policy will respect the privacy of affected individuals, is based on medical facts, and will remain consistent with applicable discrimination laws.

(1) Who is covered by this policy?

- (a) This policy is applicable to transgender individuals who desire to compete in USA Gymnastics' sanctioned competition. Specifically, athletes who want to participate in USA Gymnastics' Junior Olympic, Xcel and other sanctioned programs *below* the elite level.
- (b) USA Gymnastics cannot authorize or evaluate transgender participation at the club level because USA Gymnastics does not own, operate or otherwise control local gymnastics clubs; however, guidelines for inclusion to assist gym clubs and other gymnastics professionals who may train transgender athletes are provided in section (5) below.
- (c) Elite athletes have the opportunity to qualify for the U.S. National Team and represent the United States in international competition. Eligibility for transgender participation at USA Gymnastics' elite level will be governed by all applicable policies and criteria required by its governing bodies: the International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Gymnastics Federation (FIG), and U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC).

(2) Application and Review Process

- (a) Upon written request from a concerned athlete (or parent/guardian if the athlete is a minor), USA Gymnastics will evaluate participation in its sanctioned activities for a transgender athlete. Requests will be confidentially evaluated in compliance with HIPPA law and will be specific to the athlete's personal circumstances.
- (b) USA Gymnastics will convene an Eligibility Committee to evaluate requests for participation by transgender individuals. Appointed by USA Gymnastics, the Eligibility Committee will be comprised of three individuals: one person representing the gymnastics discipline in which the applicant requests to compete, a member of USA Gymnastics National Medical Staff, and one independent individual.
- (c) The Eligibility Committee has the right to request information relevant to the evaluation, including, but not limited to:
 - An interview with the athlete and/or the athlete's parent/guardian
 - Relevant medical records
 - Relevant legal records
 - An interview with any USA Gymnastics' Professional member in support of the application, i.e., coach or club owner
- (d) Utilizing the criteria defined below, the Eligibility Committee will render a decision regarding the applicant's eligibility to participate. The Committee has the right to limit participation and may impose other guidelines or restrictions which could include limiting the eligibility period, follow-up requirements, discipline specific attire guidelines, etc.
- (e) Applications and inquiries should be directed to membership@usagym.org.

(3) Eligibility Considerations

- (a) Requirements
 - Applicant must submit a formal letter with a request to participate in USA Gymnastics sanctioned events, which must include a statement affirming the gender identity of the athlete. If the athlete is a minor, the request must be submitted by a parent/guardian. If the athlete is under age 18, he/she/they may also submit a personal statement in support of his/her/their request.

- Applicant must provide a confirmation of gender identity from a medical professional, and if applicable, must provide any information related to an athlete's transition/intent to transition status.
- Applicants must agree to comply with all aspects of the eligibility determination.
- Committee will research applicable state discrimination laws and non-discrimination policies.

(b) Pre-Pubescent Athletes

Pre-Pubescent Athletes may be granted eligibility to participate in their affirmed gender. Some of the evaluative criteria include:

- Age
- Gymnastics Discipline
- Gymnastics Level
- Gymnastics Experience
- Evaluation of competitive advantage
- Support from gymnastics community

(c) Post-Pubescent Athletes

A post-pubescent athlete will be eligible for participation after completing their transition, provided the following:

MTF Individual:

- Surgical anatomical changes have been completed, to include the appropriate sex reassignment. Eligibility should begin no sooner than two years after gonadectomy.
- Legal recognition of assigned sex is obtained from the appropriate authorities.
- Hormone therapy has been administered in a verifiable manner and for a sufficient length of time (one year minimum) to minimize gender-related competitive advantages.

FTM Individual:

- If gender confirmation surgery is desired, the surgery has been completed, the athlete is in good health, and has been cleared by their surgeon to participate in gymnastics
- Legal recognition of assigned sex is obtained from the appropriate authorities.
- If hormone therapy is desired, it is being monitored by a medical doctor and is not being used as a way to enhance athletic advantage.

(4) Athletes' Rights and Obligations

- (a) Athletes must comply with all aspects of the eligibility determination process, or they will not be permitted to participate in USA Gymnastics sanctioned activities.
- (b) In the event an athlete is granted the right to participate in USA Gymnastics sanctioned competition, whether for a designated period of time or for as long as they remain active in the sport, that athlete must represent only their affirmed gender. In no case will athletes be permitted to 'change back' to their previous competitive gender, or switch back and forth between male and female competition.
- (c) Should an athlete be declared ineligible to compete, that individual would be notified of the specific reasons, and what steps, if any, are needed to regain eligibility. An individual has the right to appeal a decision regarding participation as a transgender athlete, pursuant to Article 10 of USA Gymnastics Bylaws.

(5) Recommendations and Guidelines for Inclusion

USA Gymnastics respects the autonomy of local clubs to operate their facilities, as they deem appropriate. Even though USA Gymnastics does not control the activities or operations of local gymnastics clubs, we encourage clubs to promote inclusion in their activities whenever possible, and as appropriate. Below are suggestions for club owners, coaches, officials and gymnasts to assist in their interaction with transgender athletes.

- Value diversity.
- Educate yourself and your staff about transgender identity.
- Be prepared to discuss transgender participation with the parents of your program.
- Respect the transgender athlete's gender identity, and use preferred names and pronouns.
- Anticipate and address any transgender access issues, including making locker rooms and bathrooms safely available.
- If requested, respect the athletes right to privacy and do not disclose any personal information (including whether an athlete is transgender).
- Be prepared to address discriminatory behavior, based on any perceived or actual gender identity or gender expression of an athlete.

(6) Definitions

Gender-related terms are defined in various sources. USA Gymnastics has not adopted any specific gender-related definitions, rather, provides these simple definitions to offer a general understanding of 'transgender' and terminology used within this policy.

Biological/Anatomical Sex: The physical characteristics typically used to assign ones gender at birth, such as chromosomes, hormones, genitalia and reproductive organs.

Gender Identity: One's internal psychological identification as a male or female.

Gender Expression: Ways in which an individual represents or expresses their gender to others, often through behavior, clothing hairstyle, etc.

Transgender: Describes an individual whose gender identity does not match the person's biological sex. Transgender is not related to sexual preference; a transgender person may be attracted to the same sex or the opposite sex.

Male-to-Female (MTF): A transgender person who was born with a male body, but who identifies as a female.

Female-to-Male (FTM): A transgender person who was born with a female body, but who identifies as a male.

Transition: The period during which a person begins to live as a new gender. Transitioning may include changing one's name, taking hormones, having surgery, or changing legal documents to reflect their new gender.

Sexual Reassignment: Surgical procedures that change one's body to conform to a person's gender identity.

Puberty: The stage of adolescence during which a child's body develops into an adult body, becoming physiologically capable of sexual reproduction. This includes hormonal and morphologic changes. On average, girls begin puberty at ages 10-11; boys at ages 11-12. Girls usually complete puberty by ages 15-17, while boys usually complete puberty by ages 16-17.