

Policy 21-14

USA CURLING – Transgender Participation Policy and Guidance

October 2021

1. Purpose

- a. This Policy nullifies and replaces the existing USA Curling Policy 16-01 “Transgender Participation in Curling,” adopted October 2016 and amended February 2017.
- b. USA Curling is committed to preventing discrimination against any of its members, including discrimination based on gender identity and expression. USA Curling welcomes participation from all curlers at all levels of competition and supports those who are transgender or non-binary. The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines about the inclusion of transgender and non-binary curlers in USA Curling events. It also provides guidance on how to support transgender and non-binary curlers in club events.
- c. This inclusion policy is guided by the following principles:
 - i. USA Curling seeks to respect all backgrounds, experiences, and identities and assumes from the outset that athletes who compete under these rules are doing so not to gain a competitive advantage, but to participate with their peers and experience the joy and spirit of curling as who they are.
 - ii. USA Curling recognizes that gender expression and/or gender identity may or may not be the same as a person’s assigned sex and that gender identity does not function on a binary system.
 - iii. Gender affirming surgery is not required for an individual to participate in athletic competition and is not required by USA Curling under any circumstances.
 - iv. Each person is in control of the ways they present and express their gender identity, and as such, no person should have their identity disclosed without their express consent.
 - v. An individual’s transgender or non-binary identity constitutes protected health information, and disclosure of personal medical information is not required beyond what is required of cisgender athletes.
 - vi. USA Curling will not require any participant to undergo any testing, of any sort, to verify a gender identity or non-gendered status.
 - Athletes will be subject to requirements of any other governing bodies when attending events hosted by those governing bodies, such as the World Curling Federation or International Olympic Committee.

2. Definitions

Transgender is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth. Transgender people identify as male, female and sometimes as non-binary, meaning that their gender falls outside of the male/female binary categories. Transgender people may take hormones to change their bodies to more closely match their gender, and some undergo gender confirmation surgery as well. However, not all take these steps, and being a transgender person is not contingent upon them. Transgender people do not seek to gain competitive advantage through the transition process; they undergo medically, emotionally, and socially necessary changes to affirm their gender identity.

In this policy, the term male refers to people who identify as men, regardless of sex assigned at birth. The term female refers to people who identify as women, regardless of sex assigned at birth. While



non-binary individuals may not identify in either of these categories or may identify with one or the other at different times socially, this document will provide guidance for participation within established binary competition divisions. The term transgender will describe any person whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned gender at birth.

USA Curling recognizes that the below words have complex meanings, and for the purposes of this document we are using general but operational definitions:

- a. Non-binary (nb or enby): An umbrella category that describes gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine--gender identities that are outside the gender binary.
- b. Transgender (trans): Describes a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- c. Cisgender (cis): Describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- d. Gender: The socially constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes that society associates with one's sex assigned at birth.
- e. Gender Expression: The manner in which an individual represents or expresses gender to others through behavior, outward appearance, activities, mannerisms, etc.
- f. Gender Identity: An individual's deeply held sense or knowledge of their gender.
- g. Sex Assigned at Birth: The sex that is assigned to an infant at birth, usually by a doctor or medical staff, based on the infant's visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics. Classifications made are most often male, female, or intersex.

3. Participation Guidelines

Guidelines for participation of transgender curlers differ by the level of competition because of the rules of the organizing body. This policy should not be construed to supersede the policy of another organizing body when competing in an event that does not fall under USA Curling rules.

a. **Olympic, Paralympic, and World Events**

All competitions conducted by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the World Curling Federation (WCF) must follow the policies established by the IOC with respect to transgender athletes. At the time of enactment of this document, the World Curling Federation (WCF) follows the policies established by the IOC with respect to transgender athletes. The IOC revised its transgender guidelines in November 2015. In brief, IOC guidelines permit athletes who transition from female to male to compete in the male category without restriction. Athletes who transition from male to female are permitted to compete in the female category if she has declared her gender identity as female and if her testosterone level in serum is at an acceptable level for one year prior to her first competition. More details about the IOC guidelines can be found on their website (see references). It is the responsibility of transgender athletes competing in events leading to IOC and WCF competitions to understand and maintain their own eligibility for these competitions.

b. **U.S. National Championships and Other Competitive Events Hosted by USA Curling** Eligibility -

All U.S. championship events must follow USA Curling policy with respect to transgender and non-binary athletes. This includes Men's, Women's, Junior Men's (U18 & U21), Junior Women's (U18 & U21), Mixed, Mixed Doubles, Senior, Club National, Wheelchair Team Trials, and Arena National Championships.

Considering the most up-to-date medical and expert information available at the time of the implementation of this policy, participation in events hosted by USA Curling is open to:



- i. Athletes seeking to participate in the division based on their sex assigned at birth, regardless of their gender identity.
- ii. Athletes seeking to participate in the division based on their gender identity.
 - If the athlete has declared their gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth, the declaration cannot be changed, for sporting purposes, for the duration of the curling season. The gender identity that is submitted to USA Curling is sufficient to declare gender identity for the season. Otherwise, the gender identity that is submitted at time of registration for competitive events will be considered.
 - A participant may not declare themselves as a member of both genders simultaneously. This is not intended to be discriminatory, but to ensure evenness of treatment, as members who do identify as one gender or the other are only eligible to compete in one gender's events.
- iii. It is the policy of the USA Curling to be as inclusive as possible in these events, regardless of participants' gender identity.
 - Male-identified curlers will not be denied the ability to participate on men's or junior men's (U18 or U21) teams or as a male member of a mixed gender team.
 - Female-identified curlers will not be denied the ability to participate on women's or junior women's (U18 or U21) teams or as a female member of a mixed gender team.
 - Members who identify themselves as non-binary (or any equivalent genderless status) may declare themselves as eligible to compete in either gender's events, but they can only compete as one gender (of their choosing) for the duration of the curling season. This is not intended to be discriminatory, but to ensure evenness of treatment, as members who do identify as one gender or the other are only eligible to compete in one gender's events.
 - Athletes will not be denied the ability to participate on a team that matches their sex assigned at birth providing they have not declared a different gender for sporting purposes during the current curling season.
 - Event organizers will not ask participants to prove their gender identity through hormone testing or by submitting legal documents (notwithstanding US Anti-Doping Agency mandated testing for any athlete).

Anti-Doping-

- iv. Athletes competing in U.S. championship events leading to Olympic or World competition may be subject to USADA anti-doping testing. It is the responsibility of every athlete to know what substances are banned both in and out of competition and to seek therapeutic use exemptions (TUE) wherever necessary. This policy does not exempt any athlete from USADA testing or supersede any restrictions established by USADA.

c. Region and Member Club Events

Regional and Member Club events that are part of a USA Curling event such as playdowns or other qualification must adhere to the rules specified for such events. The following is recommended policy for Regions and Member Clubs:

- i. The Transgender policy applies to all leagues, bonspiels, and other events where gender identity is a factor in eligibility to play, or position occupied within a team ("events") hosted by the Club or Region and operated under the Club or Region's rules.
- ii. In all events, all participants will be considered to be the gender they identify themselves as.
 - Registration for a gender-specific event (men's team, women's team, or mixed doubles) is, in and of itself, considered sufficient declaration.



- iii. The Club or Region will not require any participant to undergo any testing, of any sort, to verify a gender identity or non-gendered status.
- iv. A participant will be required to declare their preferred gender identity at the time of registration for any event where gender identity is a qualifying characteristic. This will be done in as unobtrusive a manner as possible. For example, registration for a gender-specific event (e.g., men's event, women's event, or mixed event) is, in and of itself, considered sufficient declaration.
- v. A participant may not declare themselves as a member of both genders simultaneously. This is not intended to be discriminatory, but to ensure evenness of treatment, as members who do identify as one gender or the other are only eligible to compete in one gender's events.
- vi. If the Club or Region is required to certify a member's eligibility for a gendered event, the Club will use the member's self-identified gender. This should be consistent with any gender-specific leagues the member may be playing in.
- vii. All Club members will treat other members' gender status with respect. Bullying, harassment, or physical challenges will not be tolerated, and any incidents which may occur will be investigated and handled in accordance with Club or Region By-Laws.

4. Verification

An athlete's declaration of gender identity through the process of registering for a gendered event is sufficient. Transgender and non-binary individuals may or may not have identification documents that match their gender identity and the names that they generally use. Although some competitions may require participants to provide identification, the name that is provided by transgender and non-binary individuals will be the only name used in any documents, name tags, or other materials. Similarly, when competition requirements state that a curler must have their name (first or last) on their uniform, the preferred name of the individual is the only one that is required to be used. Athletes are not required to have any medical intervention, nor will they be subject to any testing to affirm their declared gender identity.

Should a competitor have a legitimate concern that a curler is misinterpreting this policy, he or she may file a formal complaint as described in the USA Curling bylaws; however, such a complaint will be treated confidentially in keeping with the privacy of the competitor(s).

Should an athlete not have adequate legal documentation to support their gender, the USA Curling, through the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, shall automatically confer an athlete's status in the requested division. All discussions, USA Curling documentation, and written support documentation surrounding an athlete's request, when applicable, shall remain confidential in accordance with state and federal laws unless the USA Curling receives written permission from the athlete. All information regarding all athletes' gender identity and medical information, including physician's information, shall be confidential per state laws and institutional policies. Any breaches of medical confidentiality will be dealt with accordingly. Should athletes have any questions regarding this policy or participating in sport, they may reach out to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee for assistance.

5. Facility Use

People shall be permitted to use changing and restroom facilities according to their gender identity. In some instances, transgender and non-binary curlers may request independent or individual facilities



to increase privacy. Member clubs and event host locations should be mindful of the needs of transgender and non-binary athletes and make such facilities available when possible.

6. Youth Participation

It is USA Curling's position to support youth and junior athletes in the participation and pursuit of competitive excellence in the sport of curling. As an organization, we recognize that medical and social interventions for adults are not always available or appropriate for junior curlers. As such, gender non-conforming juniors should be allowed to compete in the division that provides the best social and emotional support to ensure affirming and ongoing participation in the sport. Athletes participating in events governed by other bodies, such as the WCF or IOC, will abide by those organizations' policies.

The [Transgender Law & Policy Institute's](#) document, Guidelines for Creating Policies for Transgender Children in Recreational Sports, includes the following statement:

"All young people should have the opportunity to play recreational sports and have their personal dignity respected. Transgender young people are no different. In fact, because transgender young people often must overcome significant stigma and challenges, it would be particularly harmful to exclude them from the significant physical, mental and social benefits that young people gain by playing recreational sports. The impact of such discrimination can be severe and can cause lifelong harm. In contrast, permitting transgender children and youth to participate in recreational sports in their affirmed gender can provide an enormous boost to their self-confidence and self-esteem and provide them with positive experiences that will help them in all other areas of their lives."

7. References

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 - ii. Lambda Legal. “Changing Birth Certificate Sex Designations: State-By-State Guidelines.” Last accessed July 22, 2021. <http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/transgender/changing-birth-certificate-sex-designations>
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 - vi. World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). “Medical Information to Support the Decisions of TUECs - Transgender Athletes.” Last accessed July 28, 2021. <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/resources/therapeutic-use-exemption-tue/medical-information-to-support-the-decisions-of-tuecs-7>

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