



SLO-PITCH ONTARIO ASSOCIATION (“SPO”) Inclusion Policy

Guiding Principles

1. SPO supports the recommendations outlined in *Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport*, the guidance document developed by the Trans Inclusion in Sport Expert Working Group and published by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES). SPO adopts the best practices outlined in the document and has used the four Policy Guidance statements in the development of this *Inclusion Policy*. The Policy Guidance statements are:
 - a. Individuals participating in development and recreational sport (LTAD stages Active Start, FUNdamental, Learn to Train, Train to Train, Train to Compete (until international federation rules apply) and Active for Life) should be able to participate in the gender with which they identify and not be subject to requirements for disclosure of personal information beyond those required of cisgender athletes. Nor should there be any requirement for hormonal therapy or surgery
 - b. Hormone therapy should not be required for an individual to participate in high-performance sport (LTAD stages Train to Compete (once international federation rules become a factor) and Train to Win) in the gender category that is consistent with their gender identity, unless the sport organization can prove that hormone therapy is a reasonable and bona fide requirement
 - c. Individuals should not be required to disclose their transgender identity or history to the sport organization in order to participate in high-performance sport (LTAD stages Train to Compete (once international federation rules become a factor) and Train to Win) unless there is a justified reason requiring them to do so
 - d. Surgical intervention should not be required for an individual to participate in high-performance sport (LTAD stages Train to Compete (once international federation rules become a factor) and Train to Win) in the gender category that is consistent with their gender identity

Definitions

2. The following terms have these meanings in this document:
 - a. “*Association*” – SPO
 - b. “*Cisgender*” – People whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth
 - c. “*Gender*” – The socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society assigns to masculinity or femininity
 - d. “*Gender Expression*” – The manner in which an individual represents or expresses gender to others – through behaviour, hairstyles, activities, voice, mannerisms, etc.
 - e. “*Gender Identity*” – An individual’s deeply held sense or knowledge of their own gender
 - f. “*Gender reassignment*” – medically-supervised program of treatment to transition a person’s body to align with their gender identity through hormone therapy and/or surgery
 - g. “*Intersex*” – Refers to a combination of features that distinguish male and female anatomy
 - h. “*Sex*” – An individual’s biology that is generally categorized as male, female, or intersex

- i. “*Transgender*” – People whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. In order to align their bodies with their sense of gender, some transgender individuals undergo gender reassignment
- j. “*Transgender Female*” – Someone who was assigned the male sex at birth, but whose gender identity is female
- k. “*Transgender Male*” – Someone who was assigned female sex at birth, but whose gender identity is male

Purpose

- 3. The Association believes that all individuals deserve respectful and inclusive environments for participation that value the individual’s gender identity and gender expression. The Association wants to ensure that all participants have access to programming and facilities in which they feel comfortable and safe. The Association is committed to implementing this policy in a fair and equitable manner.

Actions for Inclusion

- 4. The Association pledges to:
 - a. Provide this *Policy* to Association Staff, Directors and Coaches and offer additional inclusion education and training opportunities on its implementation
 - b. Provide registration forms and other documents that allow:
 - i. the individual to indicate their gender identity, rather than their sex or gender; and
 - ii. the individual to abstain from indicating a gender identity with no consequence to the individual
 - c. Maintain organizational documents and the Association website in a manner that promotes inclusive language and images
 - d. Refer to individuals by their preferred name and pronoun
 - e. Work with transgender athletes on the implementation and/or modification of this *Policy*
 - f. When the Association has the authority to determine participants’ use of washrooms, change rooms, and other facilities, the Association will permit individuals to use the facilities of their gender identity
 - g. Ensure uniforms and dress codes that respect an individual’s gender identity and gender expression
 - h. Determine Eligibility Guidelines for transgender participants (as described in this *Policy*)

Eligibility Guidelines - Exceptions

- 5. When applicable, the eligibility guidelines of Softball Canada, and/or any major Games regarding transgender athlete participation will supersede the eligibility guidelines as outlined in this *Policy*.

Eligibility Guidelines

- 6. As a general guiding principle for the Association’s eligibility guidelines, the Association supports the following statement from *Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport*:

Based on this background and available evidence, the Expert Working Group felt that trans athletes should be able to participate in the gender with which they identify, regardless of whether or not they have undergone hormone therapy. Exceptions could be made if a sport organization is able to provide evidence that demonstrates hormone therapy is a reasonable and bona fide requirement (i.e., a necessary response to a legitimate need) to create a fair playing field at the high-performance level (p. 19)

7. The Association does not have evidence demonstrating that hormone therapy is a bona fide requirement to creating a fair playing field in high performance softball.
8. At both recreational and competitive levels, an individual may participate in the gender category of their choosing.
9. Individuals are not required to disclose their transgender identity or history to the Association or any of the Association's representatives (e.g., Coaches, Staff, Directors, Officials, etc.).
10. All athletes must be aware that they may be subject to doping control testing pursuant to the Canadian Anti-Doping Program. Transgender athletes undergoing gender reassignment are encouraged to contact the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) to determine what procedures, if any, are required to obtain a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE).

Confidentiality

11. The Association will not disclose to outside parties any documentation or information about an individual's gender identity.

Ongoing Monitoring

12. The Association commits to monitoring ongoing developments regarding national and international participation guidelines for transgender athletes and pledges to review and/or revise this *Policy* whenever new information becomes available.

Appeal

13. Any decision rendered by the Association in accordance with this *Policy* may be appealed in accordance with the Association's *Appeal Policy*.

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