



2018 Transgender Task Force Information

Key Messages

- The “Minor Transgender Athlete Task Force” was formed to address competition needs of gender diverse athletes. The goal of the task force was to encourage inclusion and maintain fairness.
- The task force recommended updates to the USA Swimming Rule Book and Policy Manual to ensure a fair, progressive and inclusive approach to competition regarding athlete participation, performance, competition, and meet/team selection.
- USA Swimming currently allows an athlete to compete in one of two competition categories (male or female). Gender diverse athletes will be allowed to request to compete in the category consistent with their gender identity. To protect competitive fairness, the continued offering of consistent criteria for age-group competition (such as athlete qualification for meets) and elite level selection (for national/international teams and camps) is unchanged.
- Criteria for athlete participation at elite levels of competition remains unchanged. Criteria (including medical criteria) will follow current USOC/IOC rules and will be clearly stated in meet information packets.

FAQ/Q&A Suggestions

1. What is this task force and why was it put together?

The Minor Transgender Athlete Task Force was appointed by the USA Swimming Board of Directors in 2017. This 10-person task force was comprised of youth experts nationwide from medical, legal, and advocacy fields. Also included were representatives from USA Swimming and the USOC, plus a swim parent and a club swimming head coach. They conducted a thorough review of current USA Swimming rules and policies in order to recommend updates related to participation, performance, competition, and selection of transgender athletes.

The task force was created to address the rapidly growing societal visibility of transgender people, and an unprecedented need to both acknowledge this group and maintain competitive fairness for all athletes.

2. Do we currently have any USA Swimming inclusive policies in place?

Yes, there are currently guidelines in place, which were created in 2014. USA Swimming has and will continue to adopt an inclusive approach for minor athletes, as outlined in the “Recommended Practices for the Inclusion of Minor Transgender Athletes” document created in 2014 and updated in 2017. The current guidelines with updated language, can be found at usaswimming.org/diversity.

3. Are the USA Swimming procedures changing?

USA Swimming has always strived for inclusiveness. These new proposals reinforce that approach and the existing policies, while providing greater detail. Minor language changes to reflect today’s athlete have been added. Most importantly, the document title has been changed from “Recommended Practices for the Inclusion of Minor Transgender Athletes” to “Recommended Practices for the Inclusion



of Gender-Diverse Minor Athletes.” Newly included are two definitions: gender identity and gender expression, and additional resources are provided.

4. What exactly will I be voting on, during Convention?

There are four proposed additions to the Rule Book: the addition of a new term “competition category”, the addition of a “National Eligibility Protest Panel”, that places protest procedures at the national level, addition of “gender identity” to USA Swimming’s Code of Conduct, and procedures to change competition category. This reinforces our existing culture of inclusion, and points to the current Policy & Procedures manual for policy that can easily evolve as the needs of our membership do.

5. What is gender identity?

One’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither. Gender identity is how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. Gender identity can be the same or different from one’s sex assigned at birth.

6. How are the taskforce recommendations inclusive?

USA Swimming adopts a fully inclusive approach, as set forth in the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. Athletes are allowed to request an Eligibility Review to switch competition category in order to participate in the competition category consistent with their gender identity.

The recommendations reinforce USA Swimming’s existing practice of allowing minor transgender athletes to participate and compete without having to prove hormone treatment/medical intervention, at the developmental level. Later, once an athlete reaches a level where they may wish to qualify for or compete in a national/international meet/team/camp, the athlete must abide by current USOC/IOC guidelines to be eligible to do so.

7. How are the taskforce recommendations fair?

There are multiple “fairness checkpoints”:

- a thorough review process by a panel when a request is made to change competition category
- a limit on the number of times an athlete may switch competition categories in a given time frame
- a National Eligibility Protest Panel to appeal any decisions
- the maintenance of strict criteria related to qualifying/selection for national/international meets, teams or camps.
- at advanced levels of competition, fairness is reinforced through the application of the more rigorous current USOC/IOC requirements, with which the NGB also complies. These include medical requirements.

8. What about competitive fairness?

Competitive fairness at all USA Swimming levels is central to the organization, and all members are doing the utmost to ensure this standard while also providing a safe, fair and inclusive environment. While there may be concerns of perceived competitive advantages, it was important to the organization in supporting its inclusive approach to encourage local sport participation at the youth level.

Certain biological traits, such as testosterone levels, are difficult to monitor in minor athletes, due to the differences in timing and appearance of puberty onset. Given children evolve physiologically at different



rates, with varying naturally occurring testosterone levels, there is no conclusive evidence that transgender athletes would have competitive advantages as minor athletes.

However, regardless of age, once an athlete contends for a spot on the National Junior Team or National Team, where they will compete internationally, the transgender athlete would be required to fulfill medical requirements. Medical considerations may include USADA's drug testing pool and/or USOC/IOC current medical criteria for competition. It is the responsibility of the athlete/family to ensure compliance with national/international medical criteria for meet/team/camp participation.

If an athlete seeks selection to any meet/team/camp, the athlete is required to comply with all medical selection requirements. For example, if an athlete is on a National Team and/or qualifies to compete for Team USA in international competition, or if the athlete is added to the drug testing list through FINA, the athlete must abide by those IOC (& USOC) guidelines regardless of age.

9. What does “medical criteria” entail?

Current IOC guidelines state that trans male athletes, athletes assigned female at birth, are able to compete without restriction. Trans female athletes must demonstrate a total testosterone level in serum below 10 nmol/L for at least 12 consecutive months prior to competition and must remain below this threshold throughout the period of desired eligibility to compete in the female category in any event. Once an athlete has declared their new gender identity, the declaration cannot be changed, for sporting purposes, for a minimum of four (4) years. USA Swimming will comply with current USOC/IOC policies for elite levels (National Teams/International) of competition.

10. What are other youth sport organizations doing?

Although a handful of National Governing Body's (NGBs) have instituted rules/policies/guidelines for transgender participation (including new guidelines from the IAAF released in April), the task force found that the majority of NGB's do not yet have much established in this area yet.

11. How does this affect ME, on my local pool-deck?

USA Swimming will encourage participation at the developmental levels. Transgender athletes are allowed to compete in the competition category consistent with their gender identity, provided a change in competition category has been approved and processed in SWIMS. If you wish to protest an athlete's participation in a category in your LSC, you may do so with the National Eligibility Protest Panel.

12. What resources are available from USA Swimming?

USA Swimming created the “LGBTQ Cultural Resource Guide” to help navigate this topic, found at usaswimming.org/diversity. A new Athlete Support Plan to assist families with a transgender athlete is in development and can be shared with any interested parties. Contact inclusion@usaswimming.org for further information.

There are many outside sources of information and support, including trans advocacy groups in your local area, PFLAG, GLAAD, NCAA Diversity & Inclusion, and the Human Rights Campaign. USA Swimming staff is also available for support and guidance.

13. What do I do if I have a transgender athlete on my team?

- The most important thing you can do is to treat them like any other athlete



- If you're interested in resources, contact USA Swimming:
 - Email: inclusion@usaswimming.org
 - Phone: 719-866-4578
 - Visit www.usaswimming.org/diversity
- Request a copy of the Athlete Support Plan to begin the discussion with your team