

Participation in Badminton by Transgender and Non-binary Players

– Explanatory Note

Introduction

Badminton England believes that everyone should be able to access and enjoy badminton regardless of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, background, or circumstances.

The Badminton England Policy for Transgender Badminton Players was approved in 2015 and updated in 2019. It is now appropriate to update this policy to take account of existing validated research and the Sports Councils' Equality Group Guidance for Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport.

We recognise that this is a developing area of policy with new research being published and changing societal attitudes. As such, we will review this policy annually before the start of each competitive season to ensure that best practice is continued.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) currently does not have a policy on transgender participation. It has, however, commissioned research to understand the impact of transgender players competing. Whilst we will continue to engage with BWF and review the research it publishes, our policy on transgender and non-binary participation will reflect what is best for English badminton. This will take account of any findings from BWF work.

Badminton England recognises and acknowledges each individual's right to define their own gender, regardless of their sex at birth. We also fully support their right to choose if, when and how to share their gender with others.

Badminton England believes that transgender and non-binary players should be able to access badminton without fear of discrimination or prejudice. People who identify as transgender or non-binary have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Badminton England operates a zero tolerance policy on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.

All enquiries regarding participation of a transgender or non-binary player as a competitor should be made via email in the first instance to inclusion@badmintonengland.co.uk

Definitions for terms used within this document and the policy can be found on page 2 within the policy.

Badminton England Transgender & Non-binary Consultation

Across June and July 2023, Badminton England conducted a consultation to gather the views of our members, the badminton community, and external partners with specialist knowledge within this area. This consisted of two key approaches:

- An online survey to gather the views of our badminton community on the balance between inclusion and fairness across all levels of the sport. This was shared directly with active Badminton England members, consisting of players, coaches, technical officials, and volunteers.
- A series of meetings with partners and individuals with specialist knowledge within this area

Badminton England remained committed to listening to the views of our badminton community, and we received 2,000+ responses from both of the above.

The consultation results show:

- There is a consensus that transgender and non-binary badminton players should be able to play in their gender of choice recreationally and at a local club, without competing.
- There is also a consensus that transgender and non-binary badminton players should play in their assigned sex at birth at all levels of competition - unsanctioned , sanctioned, national and international competitions.
- Based on this, the badminton community supports the creation of an open category, to replace men's category, to allow transgender and non-binary players to compete.

Policy Approach

The Badminton England Policy for Transgender Badminton Players was approved in 2015 and updated in 2019. It was appropriate to update this policy to take account of existing validated research and the Sports Councils' Equality Group Guidance for Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport.

The available evidence shows that Badminton should be considered to be a gender affected sport – i.e., one where the physical strength, stamina, or physique of average people of one sex would put them at a disadvantage compared with average people of the other sex.

It should be highlighted that there is limited evidence directly for the playing of badminton. The extent to which badminton remains a gender affected sport will be reviewed annually, taking into account the published and validated research at that time.

Safety is not a key consideration within our sport, but we recognise that the principles of inclusion and fairness need to be examined in developing the policy.

Policy Summary

Badminton England encourages transgender and non-binary players to play badminton recreationally in the gender they identify as. This includes all recreational participation, including No Strings Badminton, and club night activity.

For all competitive activity, including unsanctioned, sanctioned, national and international competition, players are required to play within their assigned sex at birth.

This requires competition to be categorised as:

- Female competition – players assigned female at birth
- Open competition – all individuals will be eligible to compete in the open category. This will replace the men's category.

Policy Review

We recognise that this is a developing area of policy with new research being published and changing societal attitudes – We are committed to reviewing this policy annually before the start of each competitive season to ensure that best practice is continued.