

# Participation in Badminton by Transgender and Non-binary Players Policy

## Document History and Change Control

<b>Date policy change approved by the Board of Directors</b>	<b>Change occurrence</b>	<b>Date last reviewed</b>	<b>Date for next review</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2023	Significant Updates to whole policy to reflect changes to guidance and views of badminton community	3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2023	August 2024
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2019	Update to reflect legislative changes	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2019	
2015	First policy implemented	2015	

Version No: 4  
Reason: **Update**  
Approved By: Board of Directors  
Approval Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023  
Review Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024  
Reviewer: Operations Director

## **Participation in Badminton by Transgender and Non-binary players**

### **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](mailto:inclusion@badmintonengland.co.uk)

## Definitions

Term	Definition
Acquired gender	The gender that the person has transitioned to as opposed to that which is assigned at birth, their birth sex/sex at birth
Assigned birth sex/sex at birth	The sex, male or female, assigned at birth based on physical characteristics (may also be referred to as assigned sex)
Female competition	Competition for players whose sex at birth is female
Gender affected sport	A sport whereby 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
Gender identity	A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female, or non-binary, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.
Gender reassignment*	<p>Another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender.</p> <p>Gender reassignment is a characteristic that is protected by the Equality Act 2010, and it is further interpreted in the Equality Act 2010 approved code of practice.</p>
Non-binary person/ player	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not sit comfortably with man/male or woman/female. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspect of binary identities, while others reject them entirely
Open competition	Competition for which all individuals will be eligible to compete
Sanctioned competition	<p>Badminton England sanctioned tournaments, national championships, the National Badminton League and county events where players are selected to represent their county, including county restricted events</p> <p>Please note this definition applies to this policy only</p>
Transgender person/ player*	An umbrella term to describe people who gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth
Transgender man*	Someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a male
Transgender woman*	Someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as female

Transition/ transitioning*	<p>The steps a transgender person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person’s transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all transgender people want or are able to have this.</p> <p>Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently, and changing official documents.</p>
Unsanctioned competition	Comprises local tournaments and league play. It also includes Tier 5 (social) competition.

\* As defined by [Stonewall](#)

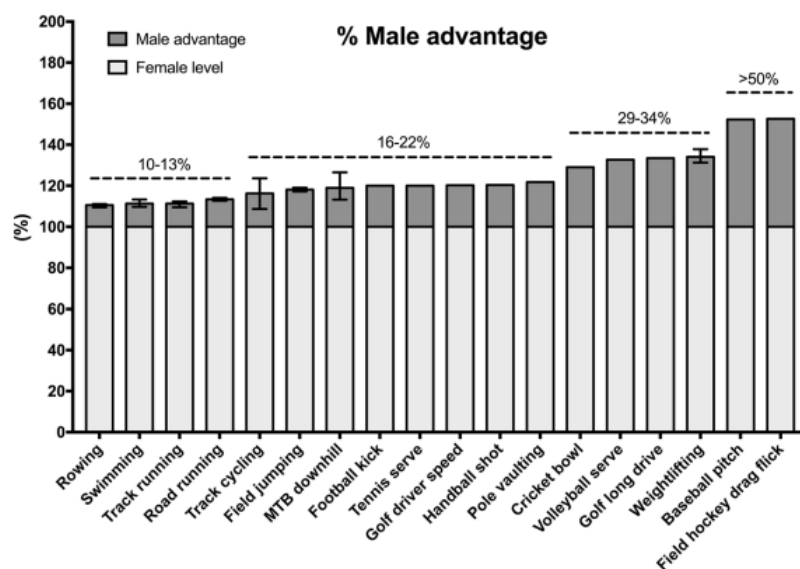
## Gender affected sport

The Equality Act (2010) makes specific provision for sports organisations to restrict participation by transgender people as competitors in an event, or events, involving a gender-affected sport. Such prohibition or restrictions can only be made in order to secure fair competition or the safety of competitors at the event or events. Badminton England will support organisations involved with the delivery of events and competitions to ensure fairness and will investigate fully any complaints relating to unfair exclusion from badminton.

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.

**Fig. 1** The male performance advantage over females across various selected sporting disciplines. The female level is set to 100%. In sport events with multiple disciplines, the male value has been averaged across disciplines, and the error bars represent the range of the advantage. The metrics were compiled from publicly available sports federation databases and/or tournament/competition records. *MTB* mountain bike



Hilton EN, Lundberg TR (2020). *Transgender Women in the Female Category of Sport: Perspectives on Testosterone Suppression and Performance Advantage*. *Sports Medicine*; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-020-01389-3>

## Approach

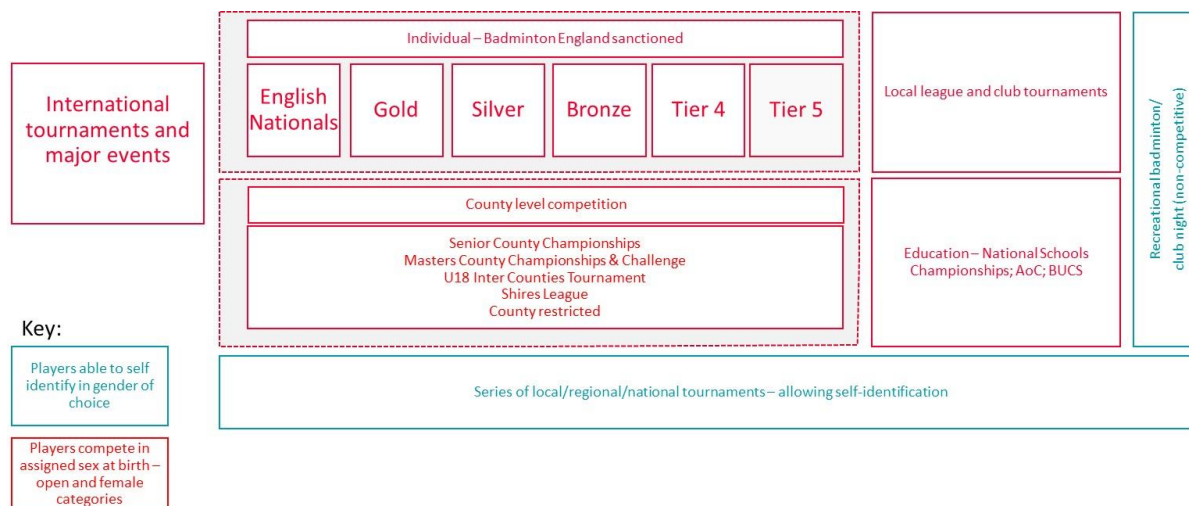
To support the participation of transgender and non-binary players across the sport of badminton, we will provide support, advice and guidance for county badminton associations, clubs, coaches, volunteers, and players to ensure transgender and non-binary players can continue their engagement in badminton, whilst and after transitioning.

### Recreational activity

1. 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.
2. No formal verification procedure is required. Players are required to self-identify via their membership profile before the start of the season. In doing so, they commit to maintaining that gender identity for the duration of the season.

### Unsanctioned and sanctioned competition

3. Unsanctioned competition comprises of local tournaments and league play. It also includes Tier 5 (social) competition and events staged for players in education (e.g., primary school, secondary school, further education and higher education).
4. Sanctioned competition includes Badminton England sanctioned tournaments, national championships, the National Badminton League and county events where players are selected to represent their county, including county restricted events.
5. Competition at these levels has the potential to enable players to secure ranking points and/or representation at county level or higher. Therefore, fairness of competition will be prioritised. This requires competition at these levels (unsanctioned and sanctioned) 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.
6. All players should remain aware of, and compliant with, anti-doping criteria.
7. Under no circumstances should a player be challenged on the validity of their participation within the relevant category during an event. Any concern should be reported, in the first instance, to Badminton England via email through [inclusion@badmintonengland.co.uk](mailto:inclusion@badmintonengland.co.uk). A malicious or vexatious accusation or breach of the policy by a player could result in disciplinary action under the [Badminton England Disciplinary Regulations](#).



## International selection

8. Eligibility for selection for England representation, including the England Junior Programme, is restricted to the player’s assigned sex at birth.

## Competitive opportunities for transgender and non-binary players

9. To support the inclusion of transgender and non-binary players, we will work with relevant parties to provide a series of events where players are able to self-identify to play competitive badminton.

## Volunteering and employment

10. Badminton England continues to welcome transgender and non-binary people to get involved in our volunteering and employment opportunities.

## Anti-doping

11. All competitors should be aware that they may be subject to doping control testing as per the UK Anti-Doping Rules. The use of hormones in most cases contravene the World Anti-Doping Agency Code and therefore any transgender or non-binary players using hormones for the purpose of gender reassignment are encouraged to contact UK Anti-Doping to determine whether they are required to apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption.

## Equality and Diversity

12. As noted above, under no circumstances should a player be challenged on the validity of their participation within the relevant category during an event. Any concern should be reported, in the first instance, to Badminton England via email through [inclusion@badmintonengland.co.uk](mailto:inclusion@badmintonengland.co.uk). A malicious or vexatious accusation or breach of



the policy by a player could result in disciplinary action under the Badminton England Disciplinary Regulations.

13. The Equality Act (2010) makes discrimination, directed at a person who identifies as transgender (whether directly or indirectly), against the law. Unwanted conduct (harassment) directed towards transgender people and victimisation, someone making a complaint about transgender discrimination and being treated less favourably, is also against the law. It is against the law to disclose someone's trans history. Anyone who has transitioned and feels their history has not been treated confidentially or has experienced transphobia whilst involved in badminton (in any capacity), can contact Badminton England for advice and support via [inclusion@badmintonengland.co.uk](mailto:inclusion@badmintonengland.co.uk).