

Participation in Badminton by Transgender and Non-Binary Players Policy

Document History and Change Control

Date policy change approved by the Board of Directors	Change occurrence	Date last reviewed	Date for next review
9 th October 2024	Significant Updates to reflect domestic legislation and Badminton World Federation Interim Transgender Interim Policy.	9 th October 2024	August 2025
3 rd August 2023	Significant Updates to whole policy to reflect changes to guidance and views of badminton community	3 rd August 2023	August 2024
30 th January 2019	Update to reflect legislative changes	30 th January 2019	
2015	First policy implemented	2015	

Version No: 5
Reason: **Update**
Approved By: Board of Directors
Approval Date: 9th October 2024
Review Date: August 2025
Reviewer: Chief Executive Officer

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 and 2023. It is now appropriate to review and update this policy to take into account The Badminton World Federation (BWF)'s Interim Transgender Policy in force from 12 November 2023 (version 1.0) (BWF Interim Transgender Policy).

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

Badminton England recognises and acknowledges each individual's right to define their own gender, regardless of their sex at birth. Badminton England also fully supports 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

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 whose 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](#)

Domestic legislation

In drafting this policy, Badminton England has had regard to domestic legislation which concerns the participation of transgender people in domestic sport, including:

- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Equality Act 2010 (EqA).

Gender affected sport

The EqA 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.

As a non-contact sport, Badminton England recognises that there are, as such, no safety concerns for any transgender people wishing to take part in Badminton.

However, the available scientific evidence indicates that Badminton can be considered to be a gender affected sport in terms of fair competition – i.e., one where the physical strength, stamina, or physique of average people of one sex (female) would put them at a disadvantage compared with average people of the other sex (male).

In that regard, Badminton England notes that the BWF Interim Transgender Policy states, amongst other matters, that:

“According to scientific research men, physiologically and on average, have more power and stamina than women, which has relevance when addressing the question of the participation of transgender players. Through research, the BWF seeks to explore this hypothesis in order to arrive at a final policy decision.

While research is carried out and until a position is reached, the BWF will assess the inclusion of transgender athletes on a case-by-case basis.

Such assessment will take into account criteria such as:

- the player’s sex at birth as an initial guiding principle,
- the player’s level, potential and playing history (all of which, prior to transition),
- variables related to the player’s transition (such as age and timeline of transition, type of treatment).”

Badminton England highlights that there is still currently no scientific evidence specifically for the playing of badminton. The extent to which badminton remains a gender affected sport in terms of fair competition will therefore continue to be

reviewed annually, taking into account the published and validated research at that time.

Badminton England also believes that having an annually reviewable policy is more practical and workable than Badminton England assessing inclusion of transgender athletes on a case-by-case basis in order to assist consistency, avoid uncertainty and delays, and provide guidance to those participating or organising the sport of badminton domestically.

Approach

To support the participation of transgender and non-binary players across the sport of badminton, Badminton England 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).
 - The National Schools Championships are currently exempt from this policy and will be delivered in accordance with government guidance in schools where there is no risk of harm.
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 (unsanctioned and sanctioned) 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. Badminton England notes that female and open competition categories is an option put forward to National Governing Bodies in The UK Sports Council Guidance for Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport, September 2021.
7. All players should remain aware of, and compliant with, anti-doping criteria.

8. 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. 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 competition

9. Eligibility to compete in international competitions, including but not limited to via the England Junior Programme, is restricted to the player's assigned sex at birth subject to, as applicable, any decision by the BWF on a case-by-case basis in line with the BWF's Interim Transgender Policy.

Competitive opportunities for transgender and non-binary players

10. To support the inclusion of transgender and non-binary players, Badminton England 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

11. Badminton England continues to welcome transgender and non-binary people in the gender they identify as to get involved in our volunteering and employment opportunities.

Anti-doping

12. 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

13. 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. A malicious or vexatious accusation or breach of the policy by a player could result in disciplinary action under the Badminton England Disciplinary Regulations.
14. The EqA 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