

International Surfing Association (ISA) Transgender Policy Rule Updated March 7, 2023

In 2021, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) released the Framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations. The Framework makes clear that eligibility criteria applying to transgender (trans) people and/or people with sex variations must be evidence-based, rights-respecting, and developed on a sport-by-sport basis. In this context, as eligibility rules are being developed by various sporting organizations and governing bodies around the world, the ISA wants to clarify its current Transgender Policy.

The International Surfing Association is committed to the fundamental principles of fairness and equality of opportunity, particularly for our women surfers, whose participation is integral to the growth and success of our sport. . The ISA is also committed to ensuring the sport of surfing continues to offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for all surfers, regardless of their gender identity, cultural background, dis/ability status, nationality, or any other characteristic. This policy document outlines the specific eligibility considerations as it relates to participation in ISA Events as well as the ISA position with regard to non-elite surfing.

In light of the emergent and evolving knowledge base with respect to the inclusion of trans athletes in particular, this policy will be reevaluated annually as more research and insights become available.

ISA Events

The following Rule is intended to guide the Medical Commission in determining the eligibility of transgender athletes and/or athletes with sex variations to compete in a women's or men's event at the ISA level. A transgender person (often shortened to "trans") is someone whose gender differs from the sex category that they were assigned at birth. Sex variations refers to the wide range of natural variations that can occur in someone's sex characteristics. Such people may or may not identify with the term intersex.

1. Any athlete who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a man is eligible to compete in a men's event or as a man in a mixed event.
2. Any athlete who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a woman is eligible to compete in a women's event or as a woman in a mixed event.

3. An athlete who was assigned male at birth, who identifies as a woman, may still compete in the men's competition category. In the event that she wishes to compete in a women's event or as a woman in a mixed event, she will be eligible to do so if she has met the following requirements:
 1. The athlete provides a written and signed declaration that she identifies as a woman.
 2. The athlete demonstrates to the satisfaction of the ISA Medical Commission that she has maintained a concentration of testosterone in her serum of less than 5 nmol/L continuously for the previous 12 months. The Medical Commission will provide guidance to any athlete seeking an assessment of her eligibility on how she can demonstrate that she has met this requirement.

Other points to consider including/developing:

The athlete should maintain a serum testosterone concentration below 5nmol/L in order to remain eligible. The athlete and the Medical Commission will agree on a reasonable process for providing such evidence as part of maintaining her eligibility.

In the event that an athlete is determined to have not met the eligibility requirements, she will be able to request advice from ISA on how to review or appeal the decision.

Once an athlete has declared their gender, they should no be able to switch between categories at the same competition.

For avoidance of any doubt, the ISA does not have any additional eligibility rules applying to athletes with sex variations.

Surfing on a national or non-elite level

At the national or non-elite level of surfing, the ISA encourages its National Federations (NFs) to review and comply with local or national policies or regulations, as they relate to the participation of transgender athletes in sport competitions. NFs are encouraged to develop policies that uphold the value of evidence-based inclusion and that build the capacity of our sport to integrate trans and gender diverse surfers.

ISA Medical Commission
ISA Executive Committee
March 9, 2023