



Canadian Powerlifting Union Policy on Transgender and Gender Diversity Inclusion

Preamble

The Canadian Powerlifting Union (hereafter referred to as “the CPU”) believes all people, regardless of age, gender, sex, ethnicity, or ability, should have the opportunity to participate in powerlifting.

It is widely known that inclusive and safe sport benefits all participants^{1,2,3}. These benefits include increasing self-esteem⁴, developing sound work habits, perseverance in the face of obstacles⁵, improved academic attainment⁶, reduced youth criminalization⁷, and improved physical and mental health outcomes.^{8,9} Studies confirm that people who are excluded from sport on the basis of their gender identity, gender expression, or intersex status do not reap the benefits of sport¹⁰. In fact, exclusion from sport further isolates and marginalizes this vulnerable group, exacerbating negative social and health outcomes¹¹.

The CPU also acknowledges the importance of maintaining fairness and competitive integrity for the women’s competitive category. Our aim is to eliminate barriers to participation for transgender and gender-diverse athletes, while also maintaining integrity and fairness in the women’s competitive category. The CPU also upholds Article 14.1 of the IPF Policies which asserts non-discrimination in IPF Events, including on the basis of gender.

At all times, the CPU shall respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and act in a manner consistent with the Canadian Human Rights Act, of 1985. The CPU also recognizes that Bill C-16 (an act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the criminal code) adds gender identity and expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in Canada^{12,13,14,15}.

The CPU also acknowledges that the governing bodies for Powerlifting, International Powerlifting, and World Para Powerlifting, determine the parameters for qualification for International Competitions which impacts athletes and their ability to compete in these competitions.

This policy has practical applications in two main areas:

1. Grassroots Competitions - for local competitions, fun meets, and other athletic events that are geared towards participation rather than performance (e.g., any domestic competition that is not sanctioned by The International Powerlifting Federation, hereafter referred to as “the IPF”), athletes shall be able to compete in the competitive category in which they identify. There shall be no restrictions placed on transgender or gender-diverse athlete participants.

Worlds Nominations Competitions that qualify for IPF Sanctioned Events - any competition that is categorized and/or sanctioned by the [CPU as qualifying competitions to select national teams for IPF Events](#) must comply with the IPF regulations for transgender athletes. The policy that follows indicates how transgender or gender-diverse athletes may compete in the competitive category in which they identify.

Definitions:

Athlete: refers to any individual registered as a participant/competitor within the CPU.

Competitive category: powerlifting competitions are divided into two competitive categories, men and women. An athlete's competitive category is the group against whom they compete, either men or women.

Domestic competition: any competition, for any age group, in any of the disciplines governed by the CPU held in Canada. In a domestic competition, athletes are not representing their countries but may represent other affiliations such as clubs, regional teams, and provincial/territorial teams. For the avoidance of doubt, any International Competition is not considered a "Domestic Competition".

Gender: the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that society assigns to masculinity or femininity. These include an evolving set of social roles, expectations, and stereotypes that are ascribed to biological sex and vary with time and culture.

Gender confirmation: medically-supervised program of treatment to transition a person's body to align with their gender identity through hormone therapy and/or surgery.

Gender diversity: a term that captures the wide range of ways people understand their identities, which is more complex, or different from, traditional gender categories of men and women. The term gender diversity acknowledges and respects the ways people identify outside of the traditional binary men/women gender.

Gender expression: the way an individual represents or expresses gender to others through behaviour, hairstyles, activities, voice, mannerisms, etc.

Gender identity: a person's deeply-held sense or knowledge of their own gender.

Inclusion: acceptance of individuals with diverse personal characteristics into a group or organization regardless of those characteristics.

International competition: any competition where athletes, selected by the CPU, compete against athletes representing other countries. Examples of these include (but are not limited to) the World Games, Paralympics, World Championships, Regional Championships, University Games, and Commonwealth Games. It also includes competitions in any competitions organized by or on behalf of the IPF/World Para Powerlifting, as specified in the IPF policies, or as deemed such by the IPF EC.

Intersex: a term used to describe a person born with reproductive anatomy, chromosomes, and/or hormones that are not easily characterized as men or women. This might include a woman with XY chromosomes or a man with ovaries instead of testes. Typically, intersex people are assigned one sex, men or women, at birth. Some intersex people identify with their assigned sex, while others do not. Some choose to identify as intersex, whereas others do not.

Legal gender: A person's legal gender is the gender that is recognized under the law(s) of the jurisdiction where a person lives. A person's legal gender is typically illustrated by things like legal documents and government-issued ID. The process for changing one's legal gender is onerous. It is thus not uncommon for trans people, as well as people who do not identify as either male or female, not to complete the process of bringing their legal gender (that is, the gender on their identification) in line with their gender identity.

Self-identification: the act of personally identifying oneself as belonging to a specific group of people, or as having a specific identity.

Sex: the term sex refers to a set of biological attributes in both humans and animals. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels, and reproductive and/or sexual anatomy.

Non-binary: a common term used to refer to the fluidity of gender along the gender spectrum (Also Gender Queer and Gender Fluid).

Transgender: people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were registered at birth.

Transgender Boy/Man: someone who was assigned female sex at birth but who identifies as a boy/man.

Transgender Girl/Woman: someone who was assigned male sex at birth but who identifies as a girl/woman.

IPF Categorised Competition: any competition that is categorised by the IPF under article 3.4 of the IPF By-Laws
(https://www.powerlifting.sport/fileadmin/ipf/data/about-ipf/constitution-by-laws/IPF_By-Laws_09.04.2023v6.pdf) where the Eligibility Rules for Competition apply.

Worlds Nominations Competition: A competition that is conducted in full compliance with the applicable and relevant IPF Competition and Technical Rules, from which athletes may be selected by the CPU to represent the CPU at IPF Events, and the results of which are used by the IPF in sorting nominations and rankings for competitions. These meets include the Canadian National and Regional Canadian Championships.

1. Inclusion Principles

- 1.1. The CPU recognizes the immense physical, psychological, and social benefits of participating in sport.
- 1.2. The CPU is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive environment for all athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and staff.
- 1.3. The CPU believes that everyone, regardless of their gender identity, expression, sex, and/or sex variations should be able to participate in sport safely and without prejudice.
- 1.4. The CPU is committed to maintaining fairness and competitive integrity for the women's competitive category.
- 1.5. The CPU understands that an important facet of inclusion is putting forth an ongoing and honest effort to create an organizational framework where people with a wide range of diverse characteristics and identities can thrive.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To provide clarity and guidance for the participation of transgender and gender-diverse athletes in powerlifting competitions conducted in Canada in the context of the CPU as a member federation of the IPF
- 2.2. To maintain athlete eligibility in World Rankings Competitions recognizing the separate

competition categories for men and women as defined according to those separate and independent rules and regulations.

2.3. To provide clarity and guidance for participation in competitions other than World Rankings Competitions where, athletes, regardless of age, may participate in any event based on the gender with which they identify.

2.4. To provide a clear, fair, respectful, and confidential process by which athletes may establish their eligibility for domestic and international competitions.

2.5. The CPU acknowledges that:

2.5.1. It is a member organization of the IPF

2.5.2. The IPF enforces rules relating to the participation of transgender men and transgender women athletes at IPF-governed competitions; and

2.5.3. Various Powerlifting competitions conducted in Canada are relevant to National Team selection and representation at IPF Competitions.

3. Policy Scope and Application

3.1. This policy applies to the CPU and all Member Provinces of the CPU

3.2. This policy applies to transgender and gender diverse athletes who seek to compete in World Nominations Competition conducted by the CPU or its Member Provinces in Canada which are required to adhere to the IPF Transgender Policy and By-Laws.

3.2.1. Competitions sanctioned by the IPF:

i. World Games

ii. World Championships:

- a) Equipped World Open Powerlifting Championship
- b) Equipped World Sub-Junior and Junior Powerlifting Championship
- c) Equipped World Masters Powerlifting Championship
- d) Equipped World Bench Press Championship (Open, Sub-Junior/Junior and Master)
- e) Classic World Open Powerlifting Championship
- f) Classic World Sub-Junior and Junior Powerlifting Championship
- g) Classic World Masters Powerlifting Championship
- h) Classic World Bench Press Championship (Open, Sub-Junior/Junior and Master)
- i) University World Cup
- j) Other International Events as approved by the IPF EC

iii. Commonwealth Powerlifting Championships

iv. Regional Championships:

- a) African
- b) Asian
- c) European
- d) Oceania

- e) North American
- f) South American Federations

3.2.2. Competitions sanctioned by the IPF and conducted by an Area Association include:

- i. Equipped World Open Powerlifting Championship
- ii. Equipped World Sub-Junior and Junior Powerlifting Championship
- iii. Equipped World Masters Powerlifting Championship
- iv. Equipped World Bench Press Championship (Open, Sub-Junior/Junior and Master)
- v. Classic World Open Powerlifting Championship
- vi. Classic World Sub-Junior and Junior Powerlifting Championship
- vii. Classic World Masters Powerlifting Championship
- viii. Classic World Bench Press Championship (Open, Sub-Junior/Junior and Master)
- ix. University World Cup
- x. Sheffield Powerlifting Championships
- xi. Other International Events as approved by the EC

3.2.3. Worlds Nominations Competition (in which the results are used for Nominations in International Competitions by the IPF and conducted by the CPU) include:

- i. National Championships
- ii. Regional Canadian Championships

3.3. This policy applies to athletes. For the avoidance of any doubt, this policy does not apply to coaches, officials, athlete support personnel, administrators, or any other roles.

3.4. This policy does not apply to any other activity undertaken by a Member Province or to activities that are ancillary to competition (e.g., Coach Education, Officials Training).

4. Eligibility Rules for Worlds Nominations Competition

4.1. Worlds Nominations Competition are those competitions whose results are used by the IPF to determine nomination ranks and are also used for CPU National Team Selection to IPF Events. They are dependent on all IPF Bylaws and Policies being met to be considered as valid for eligibility, national rankings lists, qualification to International Championships and World Games, and any other IPF statistical purpose.

4.2. At Worlds Nominations Competition conducted in Canada, an Athlete must comply with the Eligibility Rules for the Competition set out by the IPF including the [IPF Transgender Policy](#). The specific eligibility conditions are set out in section 3 of the IPF Transgender Policy and, in summary, include:

4.2.1. Transgender men who wish to participate in the men's competitive category are required to provide a written and signed declaration that they identify as a man. For transgender men, the testosterone should be in the normal range of males, i.e., in the range of 10 to 35 nanomoles per litre (nmol/L) but must not exceed the normal range.

4.2.2. Transgender women who wish to participate in the women's competitive category must meet each of the following conditions:

4.2.2.1. The athlete has declared before competing that her gender identity is female and has a valid passport bearing a female gender. The declaration cannot be changed, for competition purposes, for a minimum of four years.

4.2.2.2. The athlete must demonstrate that her total testosterone level in serum has been equal or below 2.4 nanomoles per litre (nmol/L) and/or free testosterone equal or below 0.433 nmol/dL (or at or below the upper limit of normal of a particular laboratory reference) for at least 12 months prior to her first competition (with the requirement for any longer period to be based on a confidential case-by-case evaluation by IPF Medical Commission (MC), considering whether or not 12 months is a sufficient length of time to minimize any advantage in women's competition). Further information or laboratory results may be requested for decision.

4.2.2.3. The athlete's total testosterone level in serum must remain at or below 2.4 nmol/litre (nmol/L) and free testosterone at or below 0.433 nmol/L (or at or below the upper limit of normal of the laboratory reference) throughout the period of desired eligibility to compete in the female category.

4.2.2.4. Compliance with these conditions must be monitored by testing at intervals as determined by IPF Medical Commission. In the event of non-compliance, the athlete's eligibility for female competition is suspended and reapplication for validity to compete in the female category is required.

5. Domestic "Grassroots" Competitions

5.1. In competitions other than Worlds Nominations Competition, athletes, regardless of age, may participate in any event based on the gender in which they identify. This could include, for example, local grassroots competitions and meets.

5.2. In registering for domestic competition, an athlete may select the category that best reflects their gender identity and sense of self.

5.2.1. Coaches, officials, staff, and volunteers must support an athlete's right to select a competitive category that best matches their gender identity.

6. Provincial/Territorial, National, Area, and World Records

6.1. In order for an athlete's performance to be considered for a National or World Record, an athlete must first meet the [IPF Transgender Policy](#) requirements and have an active Elite membership within the CPU.

7. Assessment of Eligibility

7.1. For the purpose of confirming an athlete's Eligibility for Worlds Nominations Competition conducted in Canada by the CPU and or its Member Provinces, the CPU shall defer all assessments and decisions on Eligibility to the IPF Medical Commission.

Medical Commission

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7.2. A Transgender Athlete who wishes to be declared eligible to compete in their division and

classification at a Worlds Nominations Competition, and/or to have recognised any World Record performance in the classification they registered in must adhere to the process as outlined in the [IPF Transgender Policy](#).

8. Selecting a Competitive Category

8.1. This policy outlines how any athlete, regardless of their gender identity, may compete at any level of sport as long as they meet the eligibility regulations set forth in sections 4.2 and 6.0 of this policy.

8.2. Each calendar year, athletes will have the option to register as an elite or as a performance member.

8.2.1. "Elite" Members 14 years and older (the age at which athletes first become eligible to compete in Worlds Nominations Competitions), will be required to select and certify the gender category in which they are eligible to compete. Failure to do so, or provision of a false certification, will render the athlete ineligible.

8.2.2. "Performance" members, or athletes under the age of 14, will have the option to register in the competitive category in which they identify.

8.3. In cases where an athlete has undergone or is currently undergoing a gender transition and wishes to compete in a Worlds Nominations Competition in the category of competition consistent with his/her gender identity they must adhere to [IPF Transgender Policy](#).

8.4. The situation may arise when an athlete is not sure in which category they are eligible to compete. The following individuals may contact the CPU for confidential guidance on this issue:

8.4.1. The athlete themselves

8.4.2. The athlete's parent(s) or guardian, if the athlete is a minor.

8.4.3. The athlete's personal coach, with permission from the athlete. The coach must obtain the athlete's permission even if the athlete is a minor.

8.5. For the avoidance of doubt, no athlete will be forced to undergo any medical assessment and/or treatment. It is the athlete's responsibility, in close consultation with his/her medical team, to decide on the advisability of proceeding with any assessment and/or treatment.

8.6. Switching Competitive Categories

8.6.1. **International Competitions.** As per the [IPF Transgender Policy](#), once a Transgender athlete has satisfied the relevant eligibility requirements and has started participating in Worlds Nominations Competitions in the category of competition consistent with his/her gender identity, he/she may not then switch back to participating in the other gender category in International Competition unless and until (a) at least four years have passed since the first International Competition in which he/she participated as a Transgender athlete; and (b) he/she satisfies all of the conditions for eligibility to compete in the other gender category.

8.6.2. **Domestic Competitions.** If the athlete is not competing in Worlds Nominations Competitions and solely competing in domestic competitions:

8.6.2.1. "Elite" members 14 years and older may change their competitive category each calendar year at

the time of registration as set out in section 8.2 of this policy.

8.6.2.2. “Performance” members, or athletes under the age of 14 may change their competitive category at any time during the year and such request will be considered by the CPU and/or Provincial/Territorial Member.

9. Objections

9.1. Enquiries into an athlete’s right to compete in a given category must be done through the CPU Ethics Committee, ethics@powerlifting.ca.

9.2. Openly contesting or protesting an athlete’s right to compete in their competitive category is prohibited and could be considered Psychological Maltreatment and a violation of the CPU Code of Conduct.

10. Complaints or Appeals

10.1. Any complaint or appeal in relation to this policy is to be submitted to the Ethics Committee of the CPU. Ethics@powerlifting.ca

11. Anti-Doping Requirements

11.1. The CPU encourages athletes to seek information regarding the status of any medications they are using to determine their Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE) requirements for the use of prohibited medications, and to ensure compliance with CPU and IPF Anti-Doping Rules and WADA Code requirements where necessary. The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport provides assistance to all athletes with these aforementioned tasks.

12. Periodic Reviews

12.1. The CPU commits to continually monitoring and evaluating this policy so as to maintain those inclusion principles and purpose statements outlined herein while updating to reflect any changes in International Competition guidelines that may otherwise impact its athletes.

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