



INTERNATIONAL MASTERS WEIGHTLIFTING ASSOCIATION Gender Identity Policy

Note:

The IMWA have used the IWF (International Weightlifting Association) Gender Identity Policy and amended it to suit the age groups used in Masters Weightlifting.

February 24, 2023.

IWF Medical Committee. Approved March 30, 2023.

IWF Executive Board. Approved August 1, 2023. Date of enforcement

September 10, 2023. IWF Executive Board. Updated

January 4th 2024. IMWA amended

The International Masters Weightlifting Association have established its own IMWA Gender Identity Committee.

This Gender Identity Policy is applicable only to athletes competing in domestic, continental, or international competitions hosted or sanctioned by the International Masters Weightlifting Association (IMWA). Any athlete competing for placement on a continental or an international team organized by IMWA, or athletes representing the IMWA in a continental or an international event, shall follow the rules consistent under the entity running that event, for example, International Masters Weightlifting Association (IMWA).

I. Confidentiality

If an athlete wishes to change gender identity as listed in the membership profile in order to participate in an activity in a manner consistent with their gender identity, all discussion and documentation will be kept confidential, unless the athlete makes these records available. All communications among involved parties and required supporting documentation relating to this Gender Identity Policy will be kept confidential and all records of proceedings sealed unless the athlete and family make a specific request otherwise. All medical information provided pursuant to this policy will be kept strictly confidential as is consistent with medical privacy law. The confidentiality obligations hereunder shall be subject to any disclosure required by a valid subpoena or other legal process, but only after providing the athlete with reasonable notice of such subpoena or other legal process. The IMWA Gender committee will be responsible for coordinating these proceedings and will have the final decision based on each case.

Discrimination Policy:

- A. Any person or entity (including, without limitation, any other weightlifter, coach, or official) that provides information to IMWA for consideration under this policy is under a strict obligation
 - a. to ensure that the information is accurate and complete;
 - b. not to provide any information in bad faith, to harass, stigmatize or otherwise injure a weightlifter or for any other improper purpose.
- B. No stigmatization or improper discrimination on grounds of gender identity will be tolerated. In particular (but without limitation), persecution or campaigns against weightlifters, simply on the basis that their appearance does not conform to gender stereotypes, are unacceptable. Any such conduct will be considered a serious breach of this policy, which is, without prejudice, subject to any action IMWA may take under any applicable Regulations.
- C. Any reported discriminatory actions based on gender identity will be investigated by IMWA's Gender Sub-Committee as part of Medical committee with report to the IMWA Executive Board and sanctions imposed when appropriate.
- D. To ensure that the Policy has its intended effect to foster inclusion, safety, and fairness in weightlifting, it will be reviewed on an annual basis.

II. Gender Identity Policy

- 1) **Athletes** will be allowed to participate in one of the three categories Men's, Women's, or Open Gender categories as set forth by this IWF Gender Identity Policy requirements before competing.

Athletes are permitted to change gender categories no more than every 5 years, if eligibility requirements are met.

III. Event Categories

Domestic events hosted by national Masters bodies should attempt to have the following categories included, per their national Masters gender identity policy. For Continental, World or other sanctioned IMWA competitions, IMWA will adopt the following categories for competition.

- **Women's Events:** Events exclusively for athletes who identify as :

- 1) *A cis-female athlete*
- 2) *Those who are assigned female at birth (may include Non-Binary, DSD, Intersex)*
- 3) *Those trans-female athletes who complete hormonal transition BEFORE Completion of puberty.*

- **Men's Events:** Events exclusively for athletes who identify as:

- 1) *A cis-male athlete*
- 2) *Those who are assigned male at birth (may include Non-Binary, DSD, Intersex)*
- 3) *Those trans-male athletes who complete hormonal transition BEFORE completion of puberty*

- **Open Gender Event:** These events are for athletes of any non-cis gender, intersex, those identifying as a gender not congruent with their assigned birth gender, DSD athletes. Intersex and DSD athletes may require review from IMWA Gender Committee prior to be allowed to compete in open category in order to make sure eligibility requirements are met. Cis-men and cis-women may not participate in Open Gender category.

***Athletes must comply with IOC/WADA doping control rules congruent for Men and Women Athletes.**

IV. Eligibility Requirements

To participate in an event hosted or sanctioned by the International Masters Weightlifting Association (IMWA), an athlete **in addition to meeting competition totals** must be registered with IMWA as the gender in which the athlete wants to compete.

Athletes are obliged to submit all documentation required under the present section of this Policy no later than six (6) weeks before the first competition day of the respective Event to the IMWA (e-mail: marklavallee@icloud.com)

- A. **CIS-GENDER:** An athlete may always register as the athlete's birth gender. Must adhere to WADA accepted hormone levels for cis-gender athletes.
- B. **NON-BINARY:** An athlete who identifies as non-binary but wants to compete in the category of the gender assigned at birth, is permitted if the eligibility requirements are met.
- C. **DIFFERENCES IN SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT**-(a.k.a. Disorders of Sexual Differentiation OR 46XY –DSD OR DSD)
 - i. Differences in Sexual Development are extremely complex and individual in their nature. It is a situation where an individual cannot be assigned as a male or female. People with DSD are not transgender, although a person with DSD could of course identify as transgender. DSDs are a group of rare conditions involving chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs which usually results in a person's sex development being atypical. Numerous DSD conditions exist, with different implications for sporting performance, and they should thus not be considered as a single group.
 - ii. The individual may wish to participate in weightlifting. This policy has been developed to provide a process whereby decisions can be made bearing in mind that weightlifting is a gender affected sport but needs to deal sensitively with an individual with a DSD who wishes to participate.
 - iii. Due to the individuality of each situation, assessment will be on a case-by-case basis. An accredited specialist (ordinarily, an endocrinologist) will be required to assess the lifter and provide a report as to the diagnosis (if possible) and determine the dominant active hormone(s). The individual's supervising physician will also be required to provide medical comment on the perceived dominant gender characteristics displayed by the individual. To be reviewed by IWF Gender sub-committee to determine competition category.
- D. **TRANS-GENDER:**
 - i. **NEW ATHLETE:** If a new athlete wishes to register with IMWA as a gender other than the athlete's assigned gender at birth, the athlete must identify as that gender upon registering with IMWA.
 - ii. **CURRENT ATHLETE:** If a current IMWA athlete is declaring a gender change, then before being able to compete, the athlete must declare request to compete in a new cis category or open gender

category. In an athlete's newly designated category, the athlete must meet the Eligibility Requirements.

- iii. **NEW CIS-GENDER CATEGORY REQUEST:** If athlete is requesting a gender change to compete in a NEW cis-gender, medical documentation that athlete has:
1. Started hormonal transition before the end of puberty at Tanner stage 3 AND
 2. Hormonal levels should be submitted one month before continental and international competition as long as they compete. If the athlete does not compete in that year, they must submit one hormonal test to the IMWA Gender Committee.
 3. Definition: TANNER STAGE: The term "Tanner Stages" denotes the five stages of puberty during which individuals develop secondary sex characteristics. Tanner Stage 2 denotes the onset of puberty. The normal time of onset of puberty ranges from 8 to 13 years old in females, and from 9 to 14 years old in males. Sex Hormones generally do not start to surge until Tanner stage 4, ergo the initiation of hormone transition prior to Stage 4 was selected.
- iv. **NEW OPEN GENDER REQUESTS:** There may be some documentation needed to compete in Open Gender category must meet eligibility requirements and should be reviewed by the IMWA Gender Committee.
- v. **THE TRANSITIONING ATHLETE:** If an athlete had registered as cis-athlete and is in process of transition but has **NOT** started hormonal treatment, they will be allowed to compete in either their original gender category or Open Gender category. These cases will be reviewed by the IMWA Gender Committee to assure policy and eligibility requirements are being met.
- vi. **TRANSITION WITH TESTOSTERONE:**
1. Once an athlete (i.e. trans-male) has begun a transition with testosterone, they should compete in the Men's category or may petition to compete in open gender category.
 2. The athlete must demonstrate that his total testosterone serum level (androgenic hormone levels) are not excess of the internationally accepted standard for transgender treatment. A blood test must be shown to demonstrate hormone level at least one month before continental or international competitions. To be reviewed by the IMWA Gender Committee.
 3. Once an athlete begins hormone therapy, he must submit documentation of his hormone therapy and testosterone level to the IMWA Gender Committee for evaluation at least 1 month prior to the each IMWA-sanctioned event he participates in. An evaluation by the IMWA Gender committee approving the athlete's eligibility persists as long as the requirement in (ii) continues to be met.
 4. Compliance with these conditions may be monitored by testing. If his androgenic hormone levels are found to be in excess of the internationally accepted standard for

transgender treatment, the athlete's eligibility for competition may be suspended until androgenic hormone levels are found to be within accepted limits of the internationally accepted standard for transgender treatment for at least 12 months

vii. MALE TO FEMALE – TRANSGENDER:

1. She must complete hormonal transition before completion of puberty in order to compete in cis-female category.
2. She must provide a written and signed declaration issued by an endocrinologist, in a form satisfactory to the IMWA Gender Committee, that her gender identity is female.
3. She must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the IMWA Gender Committee (on the balance of probabilities), in accordance with rules, that the concentration of testosterone in her serum has been less than **2.5 nmol/L** continuously for a period of at least 12 months (per IOC rules).
4. She must keep her serum testosterone concentration **below 2.5 nmol/L** for so long as she wishes to maintain her eligibility to compete in the female category of competition.
5. To avoid discrimination, if not eligible for female competition, the athlete should be eligible to compete in male competition or open category, as set forth by eligibility requirements and review by the IMWA Gender Committee.
6. Once a Transgender female athlete has satisfied all eligibility requirements, the IMWA Gender Committee will issue a written certification of that athlete's eligibility to compete in the cis-female category.

viii. FEMALE TO MALE - TRANSGENDER:

- ix. To be eligible to participate in the cis-male category at a IMWA Competition, a transgender male athlete must provide a written and signed declaration issued by an endocrinologist, in a form satisfactory to the IMWA Gender Committee, that his gender identity is male.
- ii. Once an athlete begins hormone therapy, he must submit documentation of his hormone therapy and testosterone level to the IMWA Gender Committee for evaluation at least 1 month prior to the every IMWA-sanctioned event he participates in. An evaluation by the IMWA Gender committee approving the athlete's eligibility persists as long as the requirement in (D.f.ii) continues to be met.
- iii. Compliance with these conditions may be monitored by testing. If his androgenic hormone levels are found to be in excess of the internationally accepted standard for transgender treatment, the athlete's eligibility for competition may be suspended until androgenic hormone levels are found to be within accepted limits of the internationally accepted standard for transgender treatment for at least 12 months. The athlete may petition to participate in the Open Category, subject to review by the IMWA Gender

E. Hormone Levels

- a. All Three Categories: must comply with IOC/WADA levels of acceptable blood levels of hemoglobin, human growth hormone, erythropoietin, thyroid stimulating hormone, free thyroxine (T3/T4), and any other hormones.
- b. Cis-Male Category: TESTOSTERONE/DHEA/SIMILAR AGENT: must be in line with current IOC/WADA guidelines for cis-males. Testosterone to Epi-Testosterone ratio/levels must be congruent with accepted range. ANTI-ANDROGENS: Those cis-males with lower than normal range of testosterone may still compete in cis-male category. Any cis-male or trans-male undergoing anti-androgen hormonal treatment for medical or gender reasons for over one year or longer MAY compete in Cis-Male category or Open Gender category. They must submit a TUE before competition stating use of exogenous testosterone or anti-androgens. Transgender lifters may be granted a TUE only after their eligibility and gender has been established and confirmed by IMWA Gender Committee.
- c. Cis-Female Category: TESTOSTERONE/DHEA/SIMILAR AGENT:
Currently the IWF/IMWA allows females to compete with 10 nmol/L or less. This level should stay at 10 nmol/L for cis-females and Trans-Females should be allowed to compete with **2.5 nmol/L** or less of total testosterone (**numerous World Federations (ISU, FINA, IIF, World Athletics) use 5 nmol/L vs. 10nmol/L for MTF transgender athletes**). Research in women, not necessarily athletic or even female strength athletes, show that 99.9% have lower than 2.5 nmol/L of testosterone. (*Bermon et al 2014, Handellsman et al 2018*). International Powerlifting Federation has adopted the following standard for trans-females, *“The athlete’s total testosterone level in serum must remain at or below 2.4 nmol/liter (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.”* Since cis-females with naturally higher circulating testosterone will be naturally be stronger than other cis-females and be more successful in the sport of weightlifting, it is felt keeping the level at 10nmol/L is reasonable.
The same argument could be used regarding height of women’s basketball players. Studies show that 99.99% of women are under 6’2” (1.88 meters), but those naturally taller than 6’2” should NOT be penalized and be told they must compete in Open Gender category. ESTROGEN: cis-female or trans-female athlete should have circulating level of estrogen consistent of normal range for a pre-menopausal woman. Cis-athletes who complete natural, medical, or surgical menopause are allowed to compete with lower/no estrogen levels. Trans-athletes over 50 years old do not need estrogen level checked. They must submit a TUE before competition stating use of exogenous estrogen or anti-androgens. Transgender lifters may be granted a TUE only after their eligibility and gender has been established and confirmed by IWF Gender Committee.
- d. Open Gender Category: hormonal testing may be required, if formal IWF /IOC/IMWA recommendations are instituted for this category.

F. Protest

Upon formal written request from a concerned athlete, coach, or organizer regarding themselves or about any other athlete, IMWA's Gender Committee will evaluate the situation on a case by case basis. Any athlete that raises an objection must adhere to the IMWA RULEBOOK and the IMWA Gender Identity Policy. To demonstrate the utmost respect for and discretion towards all competitors. Any challenge to a competitor's gender identity is addressed through IMWA's Gender Committee and are subject to Protest of the IMWA's Rules of Competition.

In fairness to all gender categories now provided by the IMWA any athlete, coach or Masters body not providing the appropriate gender accordingly might face a possible ban from IMWA events.

G. Suggested Guidelines for Gender-Inclusive Clubs, Events, and Travel

At all times, teammates, coaches, and all others should respect the confidentiality of athletes. Discussion or disclosure of an individual's gender identity should only take place after expressed permission is given by the individual. In all cases, teammates, coaches, and all others should refer to an athlete by the name and pronoun they prefer. Intentionally failing to do so will be considered bullying and/or harassment.

- 1) **Athlete Registration.** IMWA recommends organization and event registration forms collect gender identity information as follows:

Gender: What is your gender? _____

*Instead of asking about biological sex

Pronouns: What are your pronouns? _____

- 2) **Facilities, Overnights & Travel.**

IMWA recommends all-gender restrooms be available at all facilities and the location signage should be made clear to all athletes.

IMWA recommends all athletes being assigned to share accommodations based on their gender identity, with a recognition that privacy may be important to athletes of all genders, including transgender, cis-gender, DSD, intersex, and non-binary athletes.

IMWA recommends access to private changing, bathing, and restroom spaces be made available to all athletes.

To ensure that all athletes feel supported at their member national governing boards and home weightlifting clubs and on the road, IMWA recommend that clubs initiate confidential conversations with athletes centered on establishing safety protocols and support reflective of the athlete's individual needs. It is always important to receive an athlete's prior consent about who should be included in these confidential conversations.

- 3) **Training:** IMWA recommends clubs provide LGBTQ+ and Gender Inclusion training to coaches and staff on an annual basis to ensure inclusive practices.
- 4) **Visual Affirmation:** IMWA recommends signaling that they are an organization where diversity is valued by displaying rainbow flags or logos on their websites, at in-person events, and more.
- 5) **Dress and Uniforms:** Athletes should be permitted to dress in a manner consistent with their gender. We encourage a few universal options for all athletes – not gender-specific clothing choices.

H. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY:

The IMWA Gender Committee in its own absolute discretion reserves the right to have the sole decision in all cases after intensive investigation upon receipt of all evidential and medical documentation.

In no circumstances will IMWA and its Board member, any member of the IMWA Gender Committee or any of IMWA's, officers, agents, representatives, and other persons involved in the administration of these Regulations be liable in any way in relation to acts done or omitted to be done in good faith in connection with the administration of these Regulations.

SEND ALL YOUR MEDICAL AND GOVERNMENT PROOF DOCUMENTS TO:

marklvallee@icloud.com

THE IMWA EXECUTIVE BOARD

