



# The NIRSA Championship Series Transgender Athlete Participation Policy

*NIRSA recognizes and celebrates the transgender student population among their tournament participants.*

*Through the guiding policies of the NIRSA Championship Series tournaments, NIRSA empowers students to participate in intramural sports and sport club divisions based on their expressed gender identity.*

*Adopted in December 2014*

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## **Putting the Policy into Play**

Upon adoption of the Transgender Athlete Participation Policy, NIRSA and the NIRSA Championship Series updated the guidelines that govern the tournaments.

These guidelines operationalize the NIRSA Championship Series Transgender Athlete Participation Policy empowering students to participate in intramural sports and sport club divisions based on their expressed gender identity.

## Guidelines: The NIRSA Championship Series Transgender Athlete Participation

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### *All Player Registration Forms*

All participants of NIRSA Championship Series events complete an individual NIRSA Championship Series Player Registration Form. This form contains the following language:

NIRSA recognizes and celebrates the transgender student population among its tournament players and encourages students to participate in intramural sports and sport club divisions based on their expressed gender identity.

All participants must comply with the NIRSA Championship Series eligibility guidelines. Players with questions about their eligibility or who have need for additional support are encouraged to contact the NIRSA Director of National Sport Programs [Valerie McCutchan](#).

### *Co-Rec Flag Football Player Registration Forms*

Participants who compete in NIRSA Championship Series co-rec flag football divisions are asked to self-select their gender identity. Co-rec flag football forms now include the following question:

For the purposes of participating in the NIRSA Championship Series, I identify as a:

- man
- woman

### *Tennis Player Registration Forms*

Participants who compete in NIRSA Championship Series tennis tournaments are asked to self-select their gender identity. Tennis forms now include the following question:

For the purposes of participating in the NIRSA Championship Series, I identify as a:

- man
- woman

### *Player Eligibility Requirements*

The [Player Eligibility Requirements](#) of NIRSA Championship Series includes sections that specifically address how and when an individual player's gender identity is applied. These sections include:

- The NIRSA Championship Series expects participation to be based on one's self-identified gender and that it is done in good faith and is consistent with a player's expressed gender identity.
- A participant's gender identity will be applied when there are gender specific rules or player ratio requirements for co-rec divisions.
  - Transgender individuals may play on the team that best matches their gender identity.
  - The campus official who approves the team entry on the roster/ player certification form should verify the gender indicated on the form is based on the participant's self-identification and expressed gender identity, not purely on the sex indicated in official school records.
  - Player eligibility will be based on the gender identified on the official team roster.
  - NIRSA recognizes that, for many, coming to know one's gender identity is not something that happens in an instant; it is a complex process that can occur over an extended period of time. Transgender participants are encouraged to communicate their gender identity with the campus official who is responsible for approving the team entry on the roster/ player certification form prior to the tournament registration deadline. Should the player not feel comfortable working with that campus official, the individual can contact the tournament director or the NIRSA Director for National Sport Programs and inform them of their status at least three business days prior to the tournament

### *Team Eligibility Requirements*

The [Team Eligibility Requirements](#) of NIRSA Championship Series includes a section that expressly states the policy of allowing participants to self-identify their gender. The section includes the following language:

*Individuals who identify as a woman are eligible to play on women's and co-rec teams; individuals who identify as a man are eligible to play on men's and co-rec teams. Transgender participants are eligible to play based on their expressed gender identity so long as they comply with all Player Eligibility Guidelines.*

### *Code of Conduct*

The NIRSA Championship Series [Code of Conduct](#) expressly forbids bullying or the use of homophobic and transphobic expressions of any kind.

The specific rule is:

*Participants cannot use verbal or non-verbal profanity, disrespectful language, obscene gestures or behavior; bullying and homophobic, and transphobic expressions of any kind are strictly prohibited.*

The consequences for violating this rule are significant and will trigger one or more of the following punishments:

- Suspension from the game/match;
- Suspension from the Tournament;
- Forfeiture of any individual or team awards;
- Ejection from the Tournament hotel(s);
- Ejection from the Tournament site or any tournament sponsored event;
- Forfeiture of all games/matches won and possible team elimination from current and future NIRSA sponsored or endorsed events;
- Liability for all monetary damages arising from, or caused by, a participant's conduct while participating in, and attending, a NIRSA Tournament.
- Notification to University Officials for any violation of the Standards of Conduct by an individual or team.

### *Sportsmanship statement*

The NIRSA Championship Series [Sportsmanship Statement](#) also expresses these values, with a full paragraph dedicated to its commitment to delivering inclusive and welcoming tournaments for all:

*The NIRSA Championship Series is committed to holding tournaments in a safe environment free from bullying. Offensive language including profanity, derogatory remarks around a person's race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, national origin, veteran status, social economic class, religion, or professional status, or other intimidating actions directed at officials, event staff, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the competition site.*

### *Appeal Process*

The NIRSA Championship Series [appeals process](#) has been created to ensure that all individual competitors and institutions participating in NIRSA Championship Series events receive fair and equal treatment. The ultimate goal of the appeals process is to maintain the integrity of the NIRSA Championship Series tournament brand.

Eligibility appeals based on the gender identity of a participant (e.g. if an individual or team accused an opposing participant of inconsistently presenting their gender to gain a competitive advantage) are raised and adjudicated on as follows:

- Appeals and the supporting evidence should be taken directly to the host tournament director. The tournament director will remind the appealing party that transgender participants are eligible to play based on their expressed gender identity as long as they comply with all NIRSA Player Eligibility Guidelines.
- In the event an individual or team appeals the eligibility of an opposing participant on the grounds of an opponent misrepresenting their gender to gain a competitive advantage, appeals should be handled with sensitivity and student privacy in mind.
- The tournament director or their designee will review the submitted roster to compare the gender identified on the roster with the gender expressed in the appeal. If the genders do not match, the participant will be disqualified and the team will forfeit all games that the player participated.
- The appeals committee reserves the right to modify current sanctions as necessary, including imposing additional sanctions. The appeals committee will rule on the appeal within five business days of receiving notification from the NIRSA Director of National Sport Programs.
- If there is concern that a team has not acted in good faith concerning gender identification, the NIRSA Director for National Sport Programs, may investigate a student's self-identification with the local campus official who signs off on their team's roster after the tournament concludes.

The full [appeal process](#) is available in the NIRSA Championship Series section of the NIRSA Play website.

### *NIRSA's Regional Tournament Operations Manual Non-Discrimination Policy*

The Non-Discrimination Policy section of NIRSA's Regional Tournament Operations Manual states that the NSC does not tolerate discrimination based on gender identity. Below is a paragraph from that policy:

*Standing against bigotry by holding fast to the basic principle of respect for human rights, in all matters both public and private, the NIRSA Championship Series and the NIRSA Services Corporation (NSC), a wholly owned for-profit subsidiary of NIRSA, strives to promote civil society and social justice. It is our stated position that the NSC upholds the tenets of the NIRSA Mission Statement to foster quality recreational programs, facilities and services for diverse populations and that it demonstrates a commitment to excellence by utilizing resources that promote ethical standards. Accordingly, the NSC does not tolerate discrimination against persons on the basis of race, gender, religious affiliation, age, marital or civil union status, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, intellectual development, or physical ability.*

### *NIRSA's Regional Tournament Operations Manual Facility Recommendations*

Within NIRSA's Regional Tournament Operations Manual is a section on "Best Practices for Facilities" that outlines the facility standards for NIRSA Championship Series host tournament schools. Below are the paragraphs that relate to facility accommodations for NIRSA Championship Series participants who identify as transgender.

### *Best Practices for Facilities*

Changing Areas, Toilets, Showers: Transgender student-athletes should be able to use the locker room, shower, and toilet facilities in accordance with the student's gender identity. Every locker room should have some private, enclosed changing areas, showers, and toilets for use by any athlete who desires them. When requested by a transgender student-athlete, schools should provide private, separate changing, showering, and toilet facilities for the student's use, but transgender students should not be required to use separate facilities.

Schools that do not have these facilities in place will not be excluded from consideration as a tournament hosts; however, schools that are selected to host a regional or national NIRSA Championship Series tournament whose facilities do not meet the guidelines above will be expected to work with the NIRSA Championship Series Committee to provide comparable accommodations.

Competition at Another School: If a transgender student-athlete requires a particular accommodation to ensure access to appropriate changing, showering, or bathroom facilities, school leaders, collegiate recreation professional, and coaches, in consultation with the transgender student-athlete, should notify their counterparts at other schools prior to competitions to ensure that the student has access to facilities that are comfortable and safe. This notification should maintain the student's confidentiality. Under no circumstances should a student-athlete's identity as a transgender person be disclosed without the student's express permission.

### *Learn more*

[“New NIRSA Championship Series guidelines and policies are aimed at transgender athlete inclusion”](#) | December 18, 2014

[NIRSA's Statement for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) | Adopted June 2013





