



## USA Weightlifting Policy for Transgender Inclusion Updated January 2017

### Introduction/Purpose

USA Weightlifting supports diversity and inclusion in all aspect of Weightlifting, and promotes programs that offer new and unique opportunities to participate in the sport.

Few policies exist within youth sports organizations that govern the inclusion of transgender athletes. USA Weightlifting has developed this policy in a proactive effort to help guide and support members of the Weightlifting community.

The goal of this policy is to provide transgender athletes an avenue to participate in competitive Weightlifting, and to do so in a fair manner. This policy will respect the privacy of affected individuals, is based on medical facts, and will remain consistent with applicable discrimination laws.

### (1) Who is covered by this policy?

- (a) This policy is applicable to transgender individuals who desire to compete in USA Weightlifting' sanctioned competition. Specifically, athletes who want to participate in USA Weightlifting' National events and other USA Weightlifting sanctioned programs **below** the international level.
- (b) USA Weightlifting cannot authorize or evaluate transgender participation at the club level because USA Weightlifting does not own, operate or otherwise control local Weightlifting clubs; however, guidelines for inclusion to assist gyms and other coaching professionals who may train transgender athletes are provided in section (5) below.
- (c) International athletes have the opportunity to qualify for international and represent the United States in international competition. Eligibility for transgender participation at the international level will be governed by all applicable policies and criteria required by its governing bodies: the International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Weightlifting Federation (IWF), and U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC).

### (2) Application and Review Process

- (a) Upon written request from a concerned athlete (or parent/guardian if the athlete is a minor), USA Weightlifting will evaluate participation in its sanctioned activities for a transgender athlete. Requests will be confidentially evaluated in compliance with HIPPA law and will be specific to the athlete's personal circumstances.

- (b) USA Weightlifting will convene an Eligibility Committee to evaluate requests for participation by transgender individuals. Appointed by USA Weightlifting, the Eligibility Committee will be comprised of three individuals: A member of USA Weightlifting Sports Medicine Society, An independent individual and an elite athlete as defined by the USOC.
- (c) The Eligibility Committee has the right to request information relevant to the evaluation, including, but not limited to:
- An interview with the athlete and/or the athlete's parent/guardian
  - Relevant medical records
  - Relevant legal records
  - An interview with any USA Weightlifting' Professional member in support of the application, e.g., a coach.
- (d) Utilizing the criteria defined below, the Eligibility Committee will render a decision regarding the applicant's eligibility to participate. The Committee has the right to limit participation and may impose other guidelines or restrictions which could include limiting the eligibility period, follow-up requirements, discipline specific attire guidelines, etc.
- (e) Applications and inquiries should be directed to [usaw@usaweighting.org](mailto:usaw@usaweighting.org)

### **(3) Eligibility Considerations**

- (a) Requirements
- Applicant must submit a formal letter with a request to participate in USA Weightlifting sanctioned events, which must include a statement affirming the gender identity of the athlete. If the athlete is a minor, the request must be submitted by a parent/guardian. If the athlete is under age 18, he/she/they may also submit a personal statement in support of his/her/their request.
  - Applicant must provide a confirmation of gender identity, and if applicable, must provide any information related to an athlete's transition/intent to transition status.
  - Applicants must agree to comply with all aspects of the eligibility determination.
  - Committee will research applicable state discrimination laws and nondiscrimination policies.
- (b) Pre-Pubescent Athletes
- Pre-Pubescent Athletes are be granted eligibility to participate in their affirmed gender. Some of the evaluative criteria include:
- Age
  - Evaluation of competitive advantage

(c) Post-Pubescent Athletes

A post-pubescent athlete will be eligible for participation, provided the following:

MTF Individual:

- Should show evidence that hormone therapy has been administered in a verifiable manner and for a sufficient length of time (two year minimum) to minimize gender related competitive advantages.
- If gender confirmation surgery is desired, the surgery has been completed, the athlete is in good health, and has been cleared by their surgeon to participate in Weightlifting.
- Legal recognition of assigned/identified gender has been received from one or more appropriate authorities.

FTM Individual:

- If gender confirmation surgery is desired, the surgery has been completed, the athlete is in good health, and has been cleared by their surgeon to participate in Weightlifting
- Legal recognition of assigned/identified gender has been received from one or more appropriate authorities.
- If hormone therapy is desired, it is being monitored by a medical doctor and is not being used as a way to enhance athletic advantage.

**(4) Athletes' Rights and Obligations**

- (a) Athletes must comply with all aspects of the eligibility determination process, or they will not be permitted to participate in USA Weightlifting sanctioned activities.
- (b) In the event an athlete is granted the right to participate in USA Weightlifting sanctioned competition, whether for a designated period of time or for as long as they remain active in the sport, that athlete must represent only their affirmed gender. In no case will athletes be permitted to 'change back' to their previous competitive gender, or switch back and forth between male and female competition.
- (c) Should an athlete be declared ineligible to compete, that individual would be notified of the specific reasons, and what steps, if any, are needed to regain eligibility. An individual has the right to appeal a decision regarding participation as a transgender athlete, pursuant to the USA Weightlifting Bylaws, and has the right to appear before the American Arbitration Association.

**(5) Recommendations and Guidelines for Inclusion**

USA Weightlifting respects the autonomy of local clubs to operate their facilities, as they deem appropriate. Even though USA Weightlifting does not control the activities or operations of local Weightlifting clubs, we encourage clubs to promote inclusion in their activities whenever possible, and as appropriate. Below are suggestions for coaches, athletes and officials to assist in their interaction with transgender athletes.

- Value diversity.
- Educate yourself and your staff about transgender identity.
- Be prepared to discuss transgender participation with the participants of your program, particularly with parents of youth athletes.
- Respect the transgender athlete's gender identity, and use preferred names and pronouns.
- Anticipate and address any transgender access issues, including making locker rooms and bathrooms safely available.
- If requested, respect the athletes right to privacy and do not disclose any personal information (including whether an athlete is transgender).
- Be prepared to address discriminatory behavior, based on any perceived or actual gender identity or gender expression of an athlete.

## **(6) Definitions**

Gender-related terms are defined in various sources. USA Weightlifting has not adopted any specific gender-related definitions, rather, provides these simple definitions to offer a general understanding of 'transgender' and terminology used within this policy.

Biological/Anatomical Sex: The physical characteristics typically used to assign ones gender at birth, such as chromosomes, hormones, genitalia and reproductive organs.

Gender Identity: One's internal psychological identification as a male or female.

Gender Expression: Ways in which an individual represents or expresses their gender to others, often through behavior, clothing hairstyle, etc.

Transgender: Describes an individual whose gender identity does not match the person's biological sex. Transgender is not related to sexual preference; a transgender person may be attracted to the same sex or the opposite sex.

Male-to-Female (MTF): A transgender person who was born with a male body, but who identifies as a female.

Female-to-Male (FTM): A transgender person who was born with a female body, but who identifies as a male.

Transition: The period during which a person begins to live as a new gender. Transitioning may include changing one's name, taking hormones, having surgery, or changing legal documents to reflect their new gender.

Sexual Reassignment: Surgical procedures that change one's body to conform to a person's gender identity.

Puberty: The stage of adolescence during which a child's body develops into an adult body, becoming physiologically capable of sexual reproduction. This includes hormonal and morphologic changes. On average, girls begin puberty at ages 10–11; boys at ages 11–12. Girls usually complete puberty by ages 15–17, while boys usually complete puberty by ages 16–17.