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IPF Policy Statement for Transgender Athletes

The International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) is an inclusive organization for all people with different gender identities. The IPF has been following the IOC guidelines to include transgender male to compete in male category and transgender female to compete in female category. The IPF will ensure that everyone can practice Powerlifting in a safe, secure, and harassment-free environment that recognizes and respects the athletes' needs an identity. No lifter should have an unfair and disproportionate advantage over another athlete, whether the lifter is a transgender female, or cisgender female.

The most recent IOC recommendation from November 2021 recognizes that it must be in the receipt of each sport's determination regarding transgender athletes and how an athlete may have a disproportionate advantage against their peers.

The difference in testosterone level between male and female has a significant effect on the biological makeup of an athlete – such as muscle mass, types of muscle fibres and muscle distribution. As Powerlifting is a strength sport, all these differences are directly related to performance. For IPF records in the past 50 years, male records of similar body weight categories are always significantly higher than female records. In the medical literature, it was reported that muscle behaviour in transgender females has a higher level for over 36 months despite the testosterone is at a female level. The Mayo Clinic laboratory published a normal female total testosterone highest level is 2.4 nmol/ L and free total testosterone highest level is 0.433 nmol/L. The IPF shall adopt these recommended values from this reputable laboratory.

With the above background, IPF releases this policy paper to clear any ambiguity for transgender athletes to participate in IPF events.

For a transgender athlete to compete in the sport of powerlifting, he/she must have a valid passport issued by one's country with an indication of (female) gender. The IPF will also require the athletic history of an individual that wishes to compete. It is not be permitted to claim a gender identity different from the one consistently and persistently used, with a view of entering an event in each category. An athlete that claims a gender fluid identity cannot be considered.

Those who transition from male to female are eligible to compete in the female category under the following conditions:

1. The athlete has declared 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.
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.
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. Compliance with these conditions must be monitored by testing at interval as determined by MC. In the event of non-compliance, the athlete's eligibility for female competition is suspended and reapplication for validity to compete in female category is required.

To avoid discrimination, if not eligible for female competition the lifter is eligible to compete in male category.

For transgender male, the testosterone should be in the normal range of male, i.e., in the range of 10 to 35 nanomoles per litre (nmol/L) but not exceed the normal range.

Procedures:

1. A transgender individual needs to apply for IPF approval to compete in a particular gender category. The medical reports from the treating team of doctors, all relevant blood results, and essential information need to be included for consideration. The athlete must get prior approval to compete in IPF events. Until approval, the nomination is not valid. An athlete will receive an application outcome within 14 days after submission of all requested information. If requested information is not submitted within 14 days, the application shall be withdrawn.
2. After the approval to compete is obtained, if an individual is taking a banned substance (like hormones), a TUE is required.
3. The IPF may impose conditions for validity to compete. Regular blood test results may be requested. Non-compliance to imposed condition will be equivalent to withdrawal of application to compete as a transgender individual.

This IPF policy is a guideline for all IPF National Federation Members (NFs) and shall take immediate effect. The legislation for transgender individuals varies among countries. It is up to the NF to decide whether the IPF policy may violate their human rights or other applicable legislation. A country may have a different policy for transgender athletes' participation in national level events.

The IPF Executive Committee