



PICKLEBALL CANADA POLICY

Trans Affirming and Gender Inclusive

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Policy Statement

This Trans Affirming and Gender Inclusive Policy ("Policy") aims to ensure that Pickleball Canada has an inclusive and affirming barrier-free environment where every employee, Member, Board member, athlete, official, coach, and volunteer of Pickleball Canada feels valued, respected and supported.

This Policy establishes eligibility standards for transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse individuals' participation in programs and competitions operated and controlled by Pickleball Canada to ensure those individuals have equal opportunity to participate and strive for excellence.

Guiding Principles

Pickleball Canada's approach to gender inclusion is founded on the following principles:

1. Safety, Inclusion and Equal Participation
Individuals have the right to be recognized and participate in the gender with which they identify.
2. Least Restrictive Approach
Any eligibility criteria must be the least restrictive option available and must not create unnecessary barriers or discriminatory conditions.
3. Privacy and Dignity
Athletes have the right to privacy regarding gender identity and medical history. Disclosure will only be requested where necessary and justified.

Background / Rationale

Pickleball Canada is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and equitable environment for all participants. Pickleball Canada's [Code of Conduct](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected grounds, including gender identity, or gender expression. This includes discrimination against individuals because they identify as, or are perceived to be, transgender, non-binary, two-spirit, gender-diverse, queer or questioning.

This Policy is grounded in Canadian human rights law, evidence-based research, and national guidance on inclusion in sport. Pickleball Canada recognizes the guidance developed by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), including *Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport*.

Policy Scope and Applications

This Policy applies to all individuals participating in, supporting, or involved with Pickleball Canada-sanctioned activities, including:

- Sanctioned and/or sponsored tournaments; and
- National Championships.

Definitions

The following terminology aligns with Canadian human rights standards and national sport guidance. Definitions may evolve as research and best practices advance.

1. Sex - A classification assigned at birth, typically as male or female, based on physical attributes such as chromosomes, hormones, and anatomy. Sex is not strictly binary; natural variations exist.
2. Gender - A social and cultural concept referring to identities, expressions, and roles associated with being a woman, a man, both, neither, or another identity entirely.
3. Gender Identity - A deeply felt internal sense of one's own gender, which may be male, female, neither, both, or another identity. Gender identity may differ from sex assigned at birth and is a protected ground under Canadian human rights law.
4. Gender Expression - How a person presents or expresses their gender externally, including through clothing, voice, hairstyle, or behavior. A person's gender expression may or may not align with sex assigned at birth or gender identity. Gender expression is a protected ground under Canadian human rights law.
5. Transgender (Trans) - An umbrella term describing individuals whose gender identity differs from their sex



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assigned at birth.

6. Non-Binary - A term for people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female. Non-binary identities may include being a mix of genders, no gender, or having a fluid gender.
7. Gender-Diverse - A broad term referring to individuals whose gender identities or expressions differ from societal or cultural expectations related to their sex assigned at birth.
8. Two-Spirit - A culturally specific term used by some Indigenous peoples to describe individuals who embody diverse gender identities or roles within their cultures. This term is culturally specific and should be used only by Indigenous people who identify with it.
9. Cisgender (Cis) - A term describing individuals whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth.
10. Transition - A personal process through which a transgender person affirms their gender identity. Transition may include social, medical, or legal steps, and looks different for each person. No single pathway defines transition.
11. Misgendering - Referring to a person using incorrect pronouns or gendered terms that do not correctly reflect the person's gender identity.
12. Deadnaming - Using a person's former name associated with a gender identity with which they no longer identify, without their consent.
13. Bona Fide Requirement - A legal standard referring to a rule or requirement proven to be necessary for a legitimate purpose (e.g., fairness or safety) and that cannot be achieved through less discriminatory means.
14. High-Performance Athlete - An athlete competing internationally at advanced levels of sanctioned competition.
15. SRY Gene Screening – genetic testing conducted to identify the presence or absence of the Sex-determining Region Y (SRY) gene.
16. Outing –Disclosing a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender history without their consent, except where the disclosure is required by law or reasonably necessary for the proper administration of Pickleball Canada's policies or procedures.
17. Stigmatization – Treating or portraying a person or group as socially unacceptable, shameful, inferior, dangerous, abnormal, or otherwise discreditable because of a characteristic associated with them.

Participation and Eligibility

All members whose gender is relevant to eligibility for a category of competition will register in the gender category with which they identify at the time of tournament registration. The gender category selected at registration will apply for the duration of the tournament. Non-binary participants may register in the gender category that best aligns with their gender identity.

Good Faith Expectation

Pickleball Canada respects and supports the gender identity of all participants. Individuals are expected to register in the gender category that aligns with their lived gender identity in good faith and in accordance with this Policy.

National Championships and Pickleball Sanctioned Tournaments

Individuals participating Pickleball Canada's National Championship or any tournament that has been sanctioned and/or sponsored by Pickleball Canada may compete in the gender category with which they identify at the time of registration of the tournament, and will not be subjected to:

- Requests for medical documentation, SRY Gene Screening, requirements related to hormonal level, or surgical intervention, unless Pickleball Canada can demonstrate a bona fide requirement supported by evidence.
- Requests for disclosure beyond what is required of cisgender athletes, unless tied to an approved eligibility review process.

High-Performance Athletes and National Team Pathway

Individuals participating in any high-performance and national pathway programming and competitions controlled and operated by Pickleball Canada may compete in the gender category with which they identify, and will not be subjected to:



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1. Hormone therapy or SRY Gene Screening requirements for participation, unless the international event governing body mandates such a requirement for elite-level competition and the requirement meets the standard of a legitimate and bona fide need under applicable Canadian human rights law.
2. Medical documentation to disclose surgical intervention.
3. Request for disclosure beyond what is required of cisgender athletes will not be made unless required by applicable law or by eligibility requirements established by the relevant international governing body for participation in international or elite-level competition.

Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct is strictly prohibited:

- harassment or discrimination, as defined in the Pickleball Canada *Code of Conduct and Ethics*, based on an individual's actual or perceived gender identity or expression;
- Outing;
- Stigmatization based on a person's actual or perceived gender identity or expression; and
- deliberate Misgendering or Deadnaming, or repeated Misgendering or Deadnaming after the person's correct name, pronouns or gendered terms have been made known.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Pickleball Canada will protect the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information, including gender identity and any medical information. Information will only be collected when necessary, and access will be strictly limited. No information will be given concerning someone's gender identity or stage of transition status to anyone, anytime, without express permission from the individual.

Pickleball Canada will handle allegations of discrimination based on gender expression and gender identity with utmost discretion and will avoid requiring disclosure of gender identity to third parties where possible.

Education and Communication

Pickleball Canada will:

- Publicly post this policy on their website
- Provide education for staff and board on the policy requirements
- Notify PTSOs of tournament sanction and/or sponsorship eligibility requirements in relation to this policy

Enforcement

Allegations of violations of this Policy may be addressed under Pickleball Canada's [Complaints and Discipline Policy](#) or any other applicable policy or procedure, depending on the nature of the allegation and the individuals involved.

Administrative Verification

Intentional misrepresentation or the submission of falsified documentation relating to gender identity is a violation of the Pickleball Canada Code of Conduct and Ethics. Any such violation will be addressed through Pickleball Canada's standard disciplinary procedures.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually by Pickleball Canada.