



## **USA JUDO TRANSGENDER POLICY**

**(updated February 15, 2024)**

### **I. Introduction**

USA Judo is the National Governing Body for the sport of judo in the United States and is responsible for regulating the participation of persons as competitors in activities or events sanctioned by USA Judo.

USA Judo has invested significant time in reviewing current literature\* and discussing transgender participation in the sport of judo. Throughout this process, the core tenets of consideration have been the following:

- Athlete safety and prevention of harm
- Equal and fair competition
- Research-based evidence to support athlete safety and fair play
- Inclusion and non-discrimination
- Right to privacy
- Legal policies, rulings and judgements at the local, state and federal levels within the United States
- Established national and international sport governance guidelines pertaining to transgender athlete participation and policies

USA Judo acknowledges that the science and the legal framework regarding transgender participation in sports is constantly changing and developing. There are inherent difficulties in reconciling both inclusion and safety within judo and the participation of transgender athletes, which is inherently complex. USA Judo is not in a position to wait until such time that long-term research has been conducted before creating a policy. As such, this policy will be subject to regular review and change as new research and developments emerge.

Combat sports have unique challenges regarding transgender participation due to anatomy and physiology considering, “the physical strength, stamina or physique of average persons of one sex would put them at a disadvantage (or advantage) to average persons of the other sex, as competitors in an event of a gender affected sport”.

While studies about transgender combative sport participants are limited, numerous studies have shown that transgender women may have a competitive athletic advantage against otherwise matched cisgender women. The competitive advantages may persist despite hormonal suppression. Likewise, transgender men may have a competitive disadvantage against cisgender men.

## **II. Applicability**

This policy shall apply to all athletes who wish to compete in a competition category (e.g., Male or Female) different than the biological gender assigned to the athlete at birth.

## **III. Policy**

All USA Judo sanctioned events allow mixed gender participation up to and including 10 years of age. Current research suggests that advantages between genders before puberty are negligible, but a significant advantage can be gained from testosterone exposure during and after puberty.

Participants over the age of 10 must enter the gender category which reflects the sex assigned to that individual at birth.

Exceptions to this policy may be reviewed for individuals with Disorders of Sex Development (including Androgen sensitivity)<sup>1</sup>. Requests to compete under this exception will be reviewed by the USA Judo Medical Committee and are required to be submitted no less than 12 weeks in advance of the event at which the participant wants to participate. USA Judo's Medical Committee will review records from the individual's treating physician to confirm testosterone levels less than 2.5nmol/L for 2 years and will make a confidential recommendation to the USA Judo Board of Directors. The Board will then decide if the request is approved or denied.

## **IV. USA Judo Privacy Statement**

All athlete information provided to USA Judo under this Policy, and the results of applications and assessments conducted under this Policy, will be dealt with in strict confidence and applicable privacy laws. Such information will not be used for any

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<sup>1</sup> Congenital Conditions affecting the reproductive system in which development of chromosomal, gonadal, or anatomical sex is atypical (Ex: 5- alpha-reductase deficiency, Primary amenorrhea, Androgen insensitivity syndrome, clitoromegaly, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, Drash Syndrome, Gonadal Dysgenesis), Turner Syndrome etc).

purpose not contemplated in this Policy and will not be disclosed to any third party unless that disclosure is necessary for the effective application and enforcement of this Policy or is required by law.

In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), USA Judo is legally required to protect the privacy of health information that may reveal your identity. This information is commonly referred to as "protected health information," or "PHI" for short. It includes information that can be used to identify you that we have received about your past, present or future health or condition. We must provide you with this notice about our privacy practices that explains how, when and why we use and disclose your PHI.

With some exceptions, we may not use or disclose any more of your PHI than is necessary to accomplish the purpose of the use or disclosure. We are legally required to follow the privacy practices that are described in this notice.

USA Judo shall not publicly comment on individual requests, applications or decisions under this Policy except, in its discretion, it may do so in response to public comments attributed to the athlete or athlete's representatives.

USA Judo reserves the right to change the terms of this notice and its privacy statement at any time. Any changes will apply to the PHI we already have. Before we make an important change to our policies, we will promptly change this notice and post a revised statement.

## **V. USA Judo's Approach to Inclusion**

- Mandated acknowledgement and acceptance of USA Judo's Code of Conduct by all members which includes respecting the rights of all individuals to fair treatment and equal opportunity, free from discrimination or harassment of any type, including, without limitation discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, gender identity or expression, disability, or sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state or local law.
- Provide a welcoming environment for all participants at USA Judo events.
- Make safe and reasonable adjustments for everyone to take part in USA Judo activities.
- A short-sleeved white t-shirt that is round-necked (no mock turtleneck or v-neck) may be worn under a gi for all genders and categories except in trials events or categories that qualify points which may result in competing internationally. IJF rules will be applied in these categories only allowing white, round-necked t-shirts to be worn by female competitors under their judogi as referenced in the IJF Sport Organizational Rules.
- Use of pronouns and preferred names will be encouraged.

- Neutral restroom availability is encouraged as standard operating procedure at all USA Judo sanctioned events.

## **VI. Appeal Process**

If an athlete wishes to challenge USA Judo's decision with respect to the athlete's application to compete in a category that is different from their sex assigned at birth the USA Judo Ethics & Grievance Committee's Policy and Procedures will be followed. Additionally, athletes may wish to contact the USOPC's Athlete Ombudsman Office for independent and confidential advice. The Athlete Ombudsman's office is available by email at [athlete.ombudsman@usoc.org](mailto:athlete.ombudsman@usoc.org) or by phone at 719-866-5000.

**Please note this policy is a living document and is subject to review in light of any scientific or medical developments.**