

Notes for Transgender Athletes in Sports

Each page was created for students/audiences/viewers to take notes on the material, while viewing the presentation.

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Definitions



- **TRANSGENDER**- An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms - including transgender. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.
- **TRANSPHOBIA**- The fear, hatred, disbelief, or mistrust of people who are transgender, thought to be transgender, or whose gender expression doesn't conform to traditional gender roles.

Notes:

Transphobia towards transgender individuals is part of the core issue surrounding the lack of representation of transgender athletes in sports

Discrimination against transgender athletes



- Criticism which has formed the basis for excluding transgender athletes from athletics claims that transgender athletes, particularly transgender women, hold an "unfair advantage" over other athletes and therefore should not be allowed to compete outside of their biologically gendered team.
- However, there is no direct and consistent research to suggest that transgender female individuals (and transgender male individuals) have an athletic advantage in sport.



Notes:

An economic issue



- Whether it be over the last 15 years with the United Kingdom's Gender Recognition Act in 2005, or the more recent and hyperlocal House Bill 3 in Tennessee that requires middle and high-school student-athletes to compete on their biologically gendered team, transphobia in the sporting world ranges far and wide.
- This prejudice not only affects the sporting world but damages an athlete's mental health as well as the potential economic impact of any given city that differentiates gender today.
- Andrea Arnold, senior vice president of public affairs at the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp., expands upon this thinking economically in saying: "We know from our past experience that meetings and events will avoid states when these types of bills pass. We know national and international sporting organizations like FIFA, the NBA, NFL and the NCAA have expressed concern and, in some instances, canceled events scheduled for states that have passed this type of legislation."

Notes/Terms:

Transphobia can cause an economic impact on any given city or state that bars transgender athletes from competition

Understanding Transgender Athletes



- Trans athletes do not have an unfair advantage in sports although many believe they do, which has been scientifically proven and confirmed by the "American Civil Liberties Union".
- There are no set hormone ranges, body parts or chromosomes that all people of particular sex or gender have.
- Every person's body is different and there is no evidence stating any trans athlete on average is any bigger, stronger, or faster than any athlete.

Notes:

Contrary to what some believe, there are no biological advantages that a transgender athlete has compared to cisgendered competition

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Fallon Fox



- In 2013, Fallon became the first openly transgender MMA (mixed martial arts) fighter in history.
- Fallon had 2 professional women fights before coming out as transgender in March 5, 2013.
- She faced a lot of criticism for being a transgender athlete in such a rugged sport and, many believed she shouldn't have been allowed since she was once male.

Notes:

Fallon Fox is the first openly transgender Mixed Martial Arts fighter in history.

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Social Justice

- Fallon faced a lot of criticism from many people within the sport as well saying "she is a man" or "it's unfair".
- People such as Joe Rogan were not satisfied letting her fight against other females and Matt Mitrione even had been suspended for bashing Fox for fighting against other females.
- Mixed martial arts is still a very dangerous sport and knowing that Fallon stated that, "MMA is the most dangerous sport there is for a transgender, with all the body contact, I know that". She has been an inspiration for many transgender athletes through all the pain she had been through on and off the stage.

Notes:

Fox faced backlash for her decision to fight, but continues on as an inspiration for those around her.

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Schuyler Bailar



- First NCAA Division I openly transgender athlete
- As a senior in 2019, posted team's third-best 100 breast time at the Harvard-Yale-Princeton event.
- Originally joined Harvard women's team after a stellar high school swimming career but transitioned to the men's team after coming out as transgender.
- Bailar's story highlights the misrepresentation of transgender athletes within athletics. A majority of the media portrays the "unfair advantages" held by biologically male competitors in female sports, and never displays when a biologically female athlete competes – and wins – in a male sport.



Notes:

Schuyler Bailar is one of the few examples of a biologically female athlete competing and winning in a male dominated sport.

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Cece Telfer

- In 2019, became the first openly transgender woman to win an NCAA title (400-meter hurdles event)
- First competed in the men's division from 2016 to 2017 but after coming out and beginning her transition, she was allowed to compete in the women's division
- Cece's career shows the inaccuracy of claiming "unfair advantages" are held by transgender female athletes. Comparisons of Telfer's performance before and after starting hormone therapy showed a loss in physical strength, muscle mass, and weight.



Notes:

Cece Telfer became the first openly transgender female to win an NCAA title in 2019.

Gender Identity Theory



- Gender identity is best classified as an individual's self-conception, and how that person would like to be perceived by others.
- Self-conception becomes cloudy in sports, especially for transgender athletes.
- As noted by Cathryn B. Lucas-Carr and Vikki Crane, sports psychology tends to not delve into the dialogue surrounding transgender athletes and their gender identity, but instead lumps them together with every other non-straight sexuality in athletics (533).
- This plays into the theory of visual rhetoric that surrounds transphobia. Instead of having ample information about the specifics of transgender athletes in sports, the public would rather focus on a photo of a buff transgender athlete that plays into the idea of having an unfair advantage against cis counterparts.



Notes:

The transphobia that exists today boils down to many individuals' unwillingness to accept gender identity theory and their eagerness to play into the theory of visual rhetoric.



Cultural Identity Theory

- Cultural Identity Theory explores the collective versus individual culture: how our personal sense of self fits within a group and that's group set of values and traits.
- For transgender athletes, that means reckoning their self-concept and gender identity within the community of sports and its own cultural identity and expectations of what athletes are and who should be allowed to compete

Notes:

Cultural identity theory has a large impact on transgender athletes as well.

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