



World Netball Policy on Participation and Inclusion

1. Commitment to Equality

- 1.1. World Netball (WN) is fully committed to the principles of equality of opportunity. WN is responsible for ensuring that no athlete, employee, job applicant, office holder, volunteer, consultant or committee or panel member (together "Stakeholders") is unlawfully discriminated against because of a Protected Characteristic, including those of Sex and gender reassignment.
- 1.2. This Policy should be read in conjunction with WN's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 1.3. World Netball is the trading name of the International Netball Federation Limited.
- 1.4. The International Netball Federation Limited trading as World Netball is constituted under the laws of England and Wales.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. The definitions of the terms used by WN in this Policy are contained in the glossary in Appendix A.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This Policy applies to regulate the participation of athletes in International Level Women's Netball Competitions.
- 3.2. This Policy does not apply to regulate the participation in competitions below International Level Women's Netball Competition.
- 3.3. This Policy does not apply to regulate the participation of athletes with differences of sexual development (DSD athletes) in International Level Women's Netball Competitions.
- 3.4. For any netball competition taking place below International Level Women's Netball Competition, WN expects its Members to adopt their own Policy to regulate the participation of athletes in competitions taking place under their jurisdiction, which are compliant with that Nation's domestic laws.

4. Rationale for Restriction on Participation.

- 4.1. All International Level Women's Netball Competitions is single Sex.
- 4.2. WN considers that International Level Women's Netball is a very physically demanding game that requires a high level of agility, strength, and stamina from athletes where size, strength, power, and speed are crucial for performance.
- 4.3. WN considers that International Level Women's Netball involves frequent physical contact between athletes, including incidental contact in the air which creates an

inherent risk to the safety of athletes and a likelihood of accident and injury¹. The size, strength, power, and speed of athletes affect the risk of injury occurrence and the severity of injury sustained.

4.4. WN determines that International Level Women's Netball Competition is a Gender-Affected activity in which the average strength, stamina and physique of one Sex (female) will put them at a disadvantage compared with the other Sex (male).

4.5. WN considers this Policy necessary to secure:

4.5.1. the safety of athletes competing in International Level Women's Netball; and/or.

4.5.2. fair competition in International Level Women's Netball.

5. Evidence Base.

5.1. WN is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices reflect the currently available evidence base.

5.2. WN considers that the current evidence shows that a clear difference in sport performance emerges throughout life as circulating testosterone concentrations rise in males. Adult testes produce 20 times more testosterone than females, with circulating testosterone exceeding 15 times that of females².

5.3. This Policy is based upon current evidence which strongly suggests there is retained physical advantage following the suppression of testosterone levels in those that have experienced the biological advantages of testosterone at any time in life³.

5.4. This Policy is a living document. WN is committed to ensuring that it reflects currently available evidence and will formally review it annually or sooner if future evidence, specifically in an athletic, trained population, emerges which contradicts the evidence upon which this Policy is based.

6. Summary of WN's Position.

6.1. WN determines that International Level Women's Netball Competition is a Gender Affected activity.

6.2. Eligibility for International Level Women's Netball Competition is restricted to:

6.2.1. those recorded as female at birth irrespective of gender identity; and

¹ Dina Christa Janse van Rensburg, Grace Bryant, Sharon Kearney, Praitmanand Singh, Arnold Devos, Audrey Jansen van Rensburg, Martin P. Schweltnus & Tanita Botha (2021) [The epidemiology of injury and illness at the Vitality Netball World Cup 2019: an observational study](#), The Physician and Sports medicine, DOI: 10.1080/00913847.2021.1932632

² ³ Handelsman DJ, Hirschberg AL, Bermon Circulating Testosterone as the Hormonal Basis of Sex Differences in Athletic Performance. *Endocr Rev* 2018; 39:803-29. doi:10.1210/er.2018-00020 and Handelsman DJ, Sikaris K, Ly LP. Estimating age-specific trends in circulating testosterone and Sex hormone-binding globulin in males and females across the Ann Clin Biochem 2016; 53:377-84. doi:10.1177/0004563215610589

³ The Sports Council Equality Group
<https://equalityinsport.org/docs/300921/Guidance%20for%20Transgender%20Inclusion%20in%20Domestic%20Sport%2021.pdf>

6.2.2. transgender athletes who can establish to WN's satisfaction that they have not experienced the biological effects of testosterone at any time.

8 Compliance

All issues relating to the eligibility of an athlete under this Policy will be determined by WN following consultation, as necessary, with one or more independent scientific and medical experts appointed by WN. It is an integral part of this Policy that the experts can assess whether a given athlete meets the eligibility criteria set out above. To that end, WN may ask the athlete to provide further information and documents and/or to submit to one or more medical examinations.

APPENDIX A

The terms used in the WN Participation and Inclusion Policy are defined for the purposes of this document as follows:

Sex: means an individual person's biological and physical characteristics, associated with being male or female.

International Level Women's Netball Competition: means a duly-sanctioned women's netball match, competition or event contested by national representative teams or by teams under the jurisdiction of different National Associations or by teams representing different Regional Federations

Gender Affected activity: means a sport, game or other activity of a competitive nature in circumstances in which the physical strength, stamina or physique of average persons of one Sex would put them at a disadvantage compared to average persons of the other Sex as competitors in events involving the activity.

Transgender: means a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth Sex.

References

Dina Christa Janse van Rensburg, Grace Bryant, Sharon Kearney, Praitmanand Singh, Arnold Devos, Audrey Jansen van Rensburg, Martin P. Schwellnus & Tanita Botha (2021) [The epidemiology of injury and illness at the Vitality Netball World Cup 2019: an observational study](#), The Physician and Sports medicine, DOI: 10.1080/00913847.2021.1932632

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¹ The Sports Council Equality Group

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