Player Guidance note re Participation Eligibility Policy

Introduction

The ETA Board has been working very hard to review the previous trans-inclusion policy and had the 3 distinct challenges to meet in doing so:

(i) ensuring Touch is inclusive and welcoming to all

(ii) ensuring our sport remains fair and safe

(iii) that England Touch operate within the legal framework currently in place as per the Supreme Court ruling (16th April 2025).

Given the potential legal ramifications of this, the Board went through a set of healthy discussions, identifying different approaches and reached the decision that given the risks presented by not following the legal position, there was clarity that the policy needed to reflect the legal framework and as such it was a decision only the Board could make and that it did not require consultation with the wider Touch Community at that stage.

Their decision was well informed by input from sporting agencies, scientific information, a variety of legal and guidance documents and discussions with other NGB's who have also made changes to their trans-inclusion policies.

The Board also fully acknowledged that this has the potential to impact a range of individuals and have sought to keep that impact as low as possible. In reality the Boards hands were tied in terms of what decisions they could make given the legal framework.

In putting the policy in place as a Phase 1, we are now seeking the views of our playing members, referees and coaches. We will keep this open throughout the upcoming season and fully review the impact at the end of the season.

ETA policy in brief

National Touch Series, University Touch Championships, Nationals, High Performance: A transgender player must participate as their sex recorded at birth.

Everything else (eg regional development events, local leagues, festivals, etc): A transgender player may participate as the gender to which they identify. Event organisers can determine their own participation criteria, which should be communicated clearly to participants in advance.

For example:

In the National Touch Series, if a full mixed team of six (6) players on the field includes three (3) female players, there may also be three (3) male players (which may include transgender women).

This provides clarity on the FIT regulation 5.4 which reads ***"In mixed gender competitions, the maximum number of males allowed on the Field of Play is three (3), the minimum male requirement is one (1) and the minimum female requirement is one (1)"***

What does this mean in practice for players

You should be informed of the current situation as outlined above by reading the policy document.

No player should challenge the identity of an opponent on the Field of Play, and we would remind all players about the ETA Values, and particularly that of “Respect”. We want Touch to be a welcoming and safe environment for everyone.

If you do have concerns you can raise this in a discreet and respectful way with the referee or with Tournament control, who will follow the correct procedure. In all situations the game should go ahead.