



**Comments Respectfully Submitted
to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls in Sport
from the Women's Sports Policy Working Group and Champion Women**

March 28, 2024

All four years of high school, I raced against two biological males [including Andraya Yearwood, below right] who ended up taking four state championships, two honorary awards, and countless other opportunities. It's not fair. That's why I'm suing.

-- Chelsea Mitchell, Connecticut runner



P

owerlifter Anne Andres has set four Canadian and two world women's records.

Yet Anne Andres is a man. How did that happen?



Like many other national and international organizations, the Canadian Powerlifting Union (CPU), citing Canadian Human Rights legislation, allows participants to compete as the "gender with which they identify." Andres (left) identifies as a woman. But on average, men (including trans women) possess 61 percent greater upper-body strength than women.ⁱ Many other national and international sport governing bodies have similar policies, prioritizing "trans inclusion" over women's rights.ⁱⁱ

As champion athletes, coaches, and lawyers with a collective 300-year history of women's sports advocacy and a five-year history of intensively studying the transgender issue, we support an all-female sports category. This is the category that has created all the world's female champions; all local and national female winners; and all the strong, confident, empowered girls and women who have developed and tested their skills with and against each other while learning about discipline, determination, and the pursuit of victory.

We also support sports for all – with each individual competing in an appropriate category based on physical realities such as sex, age, weight, and type of disability. We support accommodations for trans-identified males (transwomen) who do not want to compete in the male category *so long as those accommodations do not diminish females' sport opportunities or financial rewards, nor females' right to fair and safe sex-separated sports experiences.*

We appreciate the opportunity to present this joint response to the Special Rapporteur.

Including Men (Transwomen) Means Excluding Women

From a female-athlete perspective, trans-identified male athletes ("transwomen") are men. In fact, almost seventy percent of men who claim to be women make no medical changes to their bodies at all. Instead, they base their claim entirely on their chosen identity.ⁱⁱⁱ

By referring to "transgender women" as men, we do not mean to offend. We call them men because accurate, fact-based language brings this story into focus. Out of respect for their preferred term, we intermittently use "transgender women."

Under the banner of “transgender inclusion,” these men now stride into previously all-female arenas. They assert that their identity should take precedence over common sense and longstanding definitions of who is female. **This is happening in every sport**, from archery to basketball to boxing to cricket to cross-country, on through the alphabet of at least 38 sports in which male athletes are not only competing against, but defeating, women.^{iv}



50-year-old Gabrielle Ludwig stands out on this high school team

Whether intentionally or not, these men (transgender women) threaten women’s rights, safety, and privacy. Their claims to women’s trophies, scholarships, prize money, and Olympic and professional glory place men’s desires squarely in conflict with women’s rights.^v

Expecting female athletes to compete against, disrobe in front of, and share hotel rooms with trans-identified male athletes violates the **International Bill of Human Rights**, which asserts a “right to equality between men and women.” Since men have established anti-doping rules that forbid the use of extra testosterone – as virtually all men’s sports do – women must be – and have been – granted that same right. Yet males who “identify as women” have in effect ingested extra, illegal levels of testosterone. Their testosterone infusion begins in utero, accelerates into high gear at puberty, and is irreversible. It’s what makes a man a man.

Men Feel Dangerous to Women – and Present Real Dangers



Rugby player Hannah Mouncey

This is **what we’re hearing from female athletes now**: They report feeling deceived. Duped. Dominated. Conquered. Bullied. Out-run, out-swum, out-wrestled, out-boxed, out-lifted. Overpowered. Overwhelmed. They feel gaslit too, manipulated into feeling sorry for boys and men and making room for them at their own expense.^{vi}

Imagine you’re a female boxer forced flat on your back by your bigger, stronger, more muscular male opponent. He looms over you, triumphant. This is what male sports dominance feels like to women.

The male athletes may have no nefarious or menacing motives. They may just want to play sports. They may want to affirm their gender identity by doing things females do.

But from the female perspective, **any man who claims to be a woman (or transwoman) and strides into an otherwise all-female arenas seems dangerously duplicitous. His mere presence distracts women; intimidates women; preys on their confidence and sense of fair play.** Even when comparing men and women with roughly the same levels of fitness, males’ average punching power has been measured as 162% greater than females,^{vii}

according to a 2020 University of Utah study, with “the least-powerful man still stronger than the most powerful woman.”^{vii}

Off the playing fields, other dangers await. The prospect of allowing any man, regardless of attire or identity, into women’s changing rooms or restrooms forces women to become hypervigilant, even before any men have necessarily arrived.

“What was that deep voice I heard?”

“Are there any men here?”

“Might any of these people hurt me?”

Such hypervigilance can distract women from their rightful focus on their competitive endeavors and ruin otherwise pleasant experiences of camaraderie among women.

And hypervigilance is not the worst of it. A longitudinal study by Swedish researchers found that post-operative transgender males^{viii} had comparable criminal-conviction rates to male controls. In other words, sex reassignment did not decrease men’s risk for criminal convictions.^{ix} ***Trans-identified males are not violence-prone because they’re trans. They’re violence-prone because they’re male. According to the United States Department of Justice, 99 percent of perpetrators of sexual assaults are male.^x About 81 percent of violent-crime perpetrators are male, according to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Data.^{xi}***

Granting males (transgender women) access to women’s private spaces also grants access to men whose only intent is to harass or assault women. They, too, can easily don a dress.

This Used to Be Obvious: Men Are Bigger, Stronger, and Faster Than Women

Until recently, female competitions were all-female^{xii} for one obvious, undisputed reason: Men are bigger and stronger. Even pre-puberty, male and female children show marked differences in sport performance.^{xiii} Post-puberty, the gap between male and female performance explodes.^{xiv xv xvi} Men have greater strength, size, speed, and muscle mass. They have larger hearts, lungs, hands, feet, throats, and skulls. Women have greater body fat.^{xvii} These sex differences result in performance advantages for boys and men in almost every sport.^{xviii}

In addition, only women menstruate. In addition to the inconvenience of needing to locate restrooms and remove themselves from playing fields, swimming pools, and arenas to change sanitary products during training and competition, side effects can include pain, cramping, bloating, migraines, lower back pain, mood swings, and fatigue. Male athletes must navigate none of that. And only female athletes get pregnant, give birth, undergo Cesarean sections, and nurse – all of which have major impacts on training and competition.

This is why the female category exists: to exclude males. Without the all-female category, none of the world’s greatest female athletes – from Peggy Fleming to Donna de

Varona to Nancy Hogshead to Martina Navratilova to Allyson Felix to Caitlin Clark – would be household names. They would have been soundly defeated by men and lost to history. (Below: Canadian cyclist Rachel McKinnon in the red helmet, left, and in the red shirt, right.)



Adding insult to injury: Women's equipment and rules were created to suit female stature and strength. Volleyball nets and track hurdles are lower than men's. Basketballs, discuses, and shots are lighter and smaller. Golf tees are closer to the greens. Therefore, when male competitors compete "as women" they have two advantages: 1) they're using testosterone-fueled male bodies and 2) they're using equipment and rules designed for women.

Some sports are allowing males (transgender women) to compete if they lower their testosterone levels. Yet those designated levels (usually from 2.5 to 10 nanomoles per liter) are always higher than the female levels, which range from .05 to 2.4 nanomoles per liter.^{xix} Regardless of testosterone levels, such medications do not remove the male sport advantages noted above, even after many years. Nor do surgeries.^{xx xxi}

How Transgender Athletes Threaten, Intimidate, and Harm Women and Girls

Physical Violence Against Women and Girls



The most obvious type of violence is physical. In a 2014 mixed-martial-arts contest, for example, a man (transgender woman) named Fallon Fox (in photo, punching) brutalized Tamikka Brents, who suffered a concussion and an orbital bone fracture. "I've never felt so overpowered in my life and I am an abnormally strong female in my own right," she said. Fox boasted in a 2020 tweet, "For the record, I knocked two out. One woman's skull was fractured. I enjoyed it."

North Carolina high school volleyball player Payton McNabb endured lasting neck and head injuries after a tall male player spiked a ball at her head. Sports that have become particularly dangerous to women now that men compete “as women”: those involving punches or throws (mixed martial arts, wrestling, boxing); those with hard projectiles (hockey pucks; field hockey, tennis, soccer, volleyball, and lacrosse balls); and those involving rough physical contact (rugby, basketball, lacrosse).

Economic Dominance Over Women and Girls

At the last contest series I did for Red Bull, I placed second. The trans competitor who won took \$1000 dollars in qualifiers, \$3000 in finals, and \$1,000 in best trick. This totaled \$5000 of the prize money meant for female athletes.
— Skateboarder Taylor Silverman

Fifty-two years after Title IX, women still lose out on over [one billion dollars in college athletic scholarship dollars](#) compared to men.^{xxii} Most professional events pay men more than women.







The trans incursion into women’s sports poses a new economic threat. For instance: When a man (transgender woman) wins in the women’s division, men will end up taking home both the men’s top prize money and the women’s top prize money. In commerce, this would be considered an unfair business practice: accepting funds that were established to benefit a different sort of person. Women tell us they “feel robbed.”

Psychological Assaults Against Women and Girls

This graphic illustrates the story of Chelsea Mitchell, quoted on the cover page of this report – and 235 times when allowing just two boys to compete “as girls” denied actual girls opportunities and awards.

Do the Math: How Many Girls Suffer When a Boy Enters Girls’ Competitions?

When two boys who identify as trans (Terry Miller and Andraya Yearwood) competed on a Connecticut high school track team from 2017-2020, there were:

-  93 times when a girl was denied an individual or relay championship
-  52 times when a girl was denied the advancement to a championship meet
-  39 times when a girl was denied an opportunity to advance to finals
-  17 times when a girl was denied an All-New England honor
-  11 times when a girl lost a meet record, and
-  23 girls who were denied a Connecticut State Open team championship.

In other words, allowing two boys to compete against girls denied girls opportunities and awards 235 times.

How humiliated, demoralized, angry, and even violated girls and women feel when forced to compete against boys or men (transgender girls or women). How frustrating to train hard, only to be defeated by someone with a physical advantage. How discouraging to test your strength against male strength – and lose. Such experiences offer women the unenviable options of protesting, which risks censure; accepting male domination; or quitting.^{xxiii}

*I've left cycling. Losing to a trans rider hurts
on a million different levels.
– Hannah Arensman, 24, U.S. cycling champion*

Forcing Women to Undress, Use the Toilet, and Sleep in Hotel Rooms in the Presence of Men (Transgender Women) Exposes Women to Fear, Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, Voyeurism, and Exhibitionism

Per laws in many countries, women have a legal right to separate public changing and toileting spaces, and to privacy. In addition to being distracting for someone preparing for her own competition, the presence of males in such spaces can feel intimidating, threatening, even traumatic.^{xxiv xxv} For a man to watch a woman undress without her permission is a criminal offense (voyeurism).

*Transgender competitors are ruining our sport.
— Jane, 70, senior women's basketball player*

It's also criminal for men to expose their genitalia to women (indecent exposure, flashing).^{xxvi} Women who have been sexually assaulted can feel especially traumatized.^{xxvii}

Women's fears are not unfounded. According to [one recent investigation](#) of complaints of sexual assaults, voyeurism, and harassment at public fitness centers and swimming pools in London, almost 90 percent of sexual offenses against females took place in unisex changing rooms.^{xxviii} All of the assailants were male.

What Would an Invading Army Do?

Male athletes' incursions onto women's playing fields are "what an invading army would do," says clinical psychologist Suzanne Vierling. "An invading army is going to say, 'You're going to do what I tell you to do. I'm coming into your space and your world.'" One classic behavior of invading armies: appropriating land (gyms, playing fields, changing rooms, restrooms).^{xxix}

This Form of Male Violence Is Preventable

Realistically, we do not expect to end all male violence against women. However, the physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence that occurs when males (transgender women) against girls or women – is preventable. How?

Implement strict policies. ***The policies are the problem, not the transgender athletes themselves, who are usually playing by the rules set by sport governing bodies.***

We ask the United Nations, with its powerful international influence, to help prevent violence against female athletes in three ways:

1) Sports must offer a female-only category.

- a. So far, World Rugby, World Boxing Council, Great Britain Boxing, England Mixed Martial Arts Association, USA Powerlifting and a few others have implemented female-only policies, which rate a gold grade from the Women's Sports Policy Working Group.
- b. World Athletics, the International Cricket Council, Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), and World Aquatics have set this silver-grade standard: No boys or men who have gone through male puberty.^{xxx}
- c. The IOC (International Olympic Committee) and United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, by contrast, defer to each sport's governing body, thus relinquishing their leadership role. Many of those national and international governing bodies, from International Powerlifting Federation to World Rowing (skateboarding) to World Skate employ policies that have been deemed unfair by the Women's Sports Policy Working Group.
- d. Twenty-four U.S. states appropriately prohibit males from competing in female sports in schools.
- e. The Women's Sports Policy Working Group offers this Model Policy for Eligibility for the Female Category of Sport for free on its website.

2) Females must be granted all-female changing, toileting, and sleeping spaces.

- 3) Males who identify as women; "gender-fluid" athletes; and "nonbinary" athletes who do not wish to compete in male or open categories may be accommodated in other ways ***so long as those accommodations do not diminish females' sport opportunities or financial rewards, nor females' right to fair, safe, sex-separated sports experiences.***

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can be of any assistance.

The Women's Sports Policy Working Group

- **Donna de Varona, OLY**: Two-time Olympic gold medal swimmer; Title IX leader; Hall of Fame broadcaster; first president, Women's Sports Foundation
- **Martina Navratilova, OLY**: Winner, 59 Grand Slam singles, doubles, and mixed doubles tennis titles, the most ever; first openly gay professional athlete; longtime LGBTQ rights advocate
- **Nancy Hogshead, JD, OLY**: Three-time Olympic gold medal swimmer; athletes' rights activist; CEO, Champion Women; Past-President, Women's Sports Foundation; Author, *Equal Play*; *Title IX and Social Change*, Member, Federal Commission on the State of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee
- **Donna Lopiano, PhD**: Hall of Fame softball player; Title IX expert; women's sports leader; former women's athletics director, University of Texas; first CEO, Women's Sports Foundation; Past President, the Drake Group
- **Tracy Sundlun**: Six-time Olympic track coach and manager; Founding Board member, National Scholastic Athletics Foundation; co-founder, Rock 'n' Roll Marathon Series; President & CEO, World Athletics Road Running Championships, San Diego, 2025; CEO, Everything Running
- **Mariah Burton Nelson, MPH**: former Stanford University and professional basketball player; pioneering journalist and author: *The Stronger Women Get*, *The More Men Love Football* and other books

Champion Women

Champion Women is a non-profit organization that provides legal advocacy for girls and women in sports. Founder and CEO: Nancy Hogshead, JD, OLY (see brief bio above).

Contact Info

- Donna Lopiano: Donna.Lopiano@gmail.com
- Nancy Hogshead: hogshead@championwomen.org

End Notes

ⁱ Sandro Bartolomei et al., "A Comparison between Male and Female Athletes in Relative Strength and Power Performances," *J Funct Morphol Kinesiol*. 2021 Mar; 6(1): 17.

ⁱⁱ Some U.S., U.K., and international sport governing bodies that routinely allow boys or men into the female category include USA Gymnastics, USA Triathlon, Premier Hockey Federation (North American women's pro ice hockey), USA Curling, USA Fencing, Basketball England, England Handball Association. For a list of U.S. and international organizations, see the [Sport-by-Sport Listing of United States and International Policies Governing Who Can Compete in the Female Category – with Grades](#). See also the [Women's Rights Network listing of "Fair and Unfair" sports in the UK](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Annys Sinn, "6 key takeaways from the Post-KFF survey of transgender Americans," *Washington Post*, March 23, 2023.

^{iv} For glimpse of how this affects girls and women in virtually every sport, see "[578+ Male Victories in Women's Sports](#)," [Women's Sports Policy Working Group, January 2024](#); and "[She Won.](#)"

^v We use "men" because accurate language matters. We respect men's rights to dress as they please, to rename themselves, and to undergo elective medical procedures. However, to call these people women – especially when they compete against actual women on the playing fields – is to mislead.

^{vi} "How 'Inclusion' in Sport is Harming Girls and Women," *Fair Play for Women*, 2023, available at <https://fairplayforwomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/How-inclusion-in-sport-is-harming-women-and-girls-by-Fair-Play-For-Women-14-Jan-2024.pdf>

^{vii} "[Why Males Pack a Powerful Punch](#)," University of Utah, 2020, Science Daily.

^{viii} Andrew Gilligan, *The Sunday Times*, "Unisex Changing Rooms Put Women in Danger," September 2, 2018, available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/unisex-changing-rooms-put-women-in-danger-8lwbp8kgk>

^{ix} The study also compared conviction rates of post-op trans-identified males to those of women to test whether trans-identified males successfully became like women in that way. They did not. Their rates of conviction, like men's overall rates of conviction, remained significantly higher than women's.

^x "[Sexualized Violence Statistics](#)," Cal Poly Humboldt, citing US Department of Justice Violence Against Women report, 2002.

^{xi} [Social Problems](#), forthcoming December 2024 by the University of Minnesota, citing the FBI's Uniform Crime Statistics; see also FBI, "[Crime in the United States 2012](#)."

^{xii} An exception is coed sports, where numbers of males and females are balanced, rules limit male domination and injuries, and the spirit of the game – as in backyard badminton or family bowling – is often purely for fun.

^{xiii} <https://womenssportspolicy.org/pre-puberty-male-female-children-show-marked-differences-in-sport-performance/>

^{xiv} Handelsman DJ, Hirschberg AL, Bermon S. Circulating Testosterone as the Hormonal Basis of Sex Differences in Athletic Performance. *Endocr Rev*. 2018;39(5):803-29. Epub 2018/07/17.

^{xv} Clark RV, Wald JA, Swerdloff RS, Wang C, Wu FCW, Bowers LD, Matsumoto AM 2019 Large divergence in testosterone concentrations between men and women: Frame of reference for elite athletes in sex- specific competition in sports, a narrative review. *Clin Endocrinol* (Oxf) 90:15-22.

^{xvi} See BoysvWomen at <https://boysvswomen.com/#/> for similar comparisons.

^{xvii} Hilton EN, Lundberg TR. "Transgender Women in The Female Category of Sport: Perspectives on testosterone suppression and performance advantage." *Sports Medicine*. 2021;51: (PMID 33289906 and doi: 10.1007/s40279-020-01389-3). This is one of the most-cited research in academic literature. It definitively establishes that no amount of testosterone reduction can make male competition in women's categories fair, even when the athlete has been on testosterone blockers for many years.

^{xviii} Equestrian, auto-racing, sailing, and marathon swimming events offer rare exceptions to the rule.

^{xix} The exception is women with polycystic ovary syndrome, which can lead to infertility and other problems, who can have testosterone levels as high as 5.2 nanomoles per liter.

^{xx} Transwomen (males) maintain physiological, sex-linked (legacy) advantages even after multiple years on gender-affirming hormone treatment such as testosterone-suppression drugs. For example, hormone treatments do not affect height.

^{xxi} Hilton EN, Lundberg TR. "Transgender Women in The Female Category of Sport: Perspectives on testosterone suppression and performance advantage." *Sports Medicine*. 2021;51: (PMID 33289906 and doi: 10.1007/s40279-020-01389-3).

^{xxii} Champion Women, "Discrimination Against Women in College Sports Is Getting Worse," June 23, 2020, available at: <https://titleixschools.com/>

^{xxiii} Early this year, Fair Play for Women issued a report called "[How 'Inclusion' in Sports is Harming Women and Girls](#),"^{xxiii} which includes first-hand accounts of women and girls in thirty-five sports who are playing against males. "Inclusion has meant invasion, injustice and ultimately exclusion from our own category," said Sharron Davies, MBE, Olympic Silver Medalist in swimming.

^{xxiv} See WSPWG and Champion Women Policy Statement, "Access to Female Athletes' Locker Rooms Should Be Restricted to Female Athletes" January 2023, available at: <https://championwomen.dm.networkforgood.com/emails/our-position-female-athletes-locker-rooms-should-be-restricted-to-female-athletes>

^{xxv} Statistics on male violence against women remain high. According to the FBI, males are responsible for 97% of murder, 96.8% of rapes, 96% of pedophilia cases. See "FBI Crime in the United States 2018." According to RAINN, 9 out of every 10 victims of rape are female.

^{xxvi} Most trans-identified males do not undergo surgery to remove their penis and testicles. According to three recent studies, only between four and sixteen percent of transgender people undergo genital surgery. Annys Sinn, 6 key takeaways from the Post-KFF survey of transgender Americans, Washington Post, March 23, 2023; Ian T. Nolan, Christopher J. Kuhner and Geolani W. Dy, "[Demographic and Temporal Trends in Transgender Identities and Gender Affirming Surgery](#)," *Translational Andrology and Urology*, June 2019, pp. 184-190.

^{xxvii} David Cantor et. al., Association of American Universities, "[Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct](#)," 2019. "According to a recent survey of nearly 182,000 students, 26% of female college and graduate students report nonconsensual sexual contact by physical force or an inability to consent since enrolling in the school."

^{xxviii} Andrew Gilligan, The Sunday Times, "Unisex Changing Rooms Put Women in Danger," September 2, 2018, available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/unisex-changing-rooms-put-women-in-danger-8lwbp8kgk>

^{xxix} Suzanne Vierling, in a [2023 presentation at an International Women's Sports Summit](#)

^{xxx} See a [Sport-by-Sport Listing of United States and International Policies Governing Who Can Compete in the Female Category – with Grades](#). See also the [Women's Rights Network sport-by-sport listing of "Fair and Unfair" Sports in the UK](#).