



WORLD KARATE FEDERATION

December 2024

WKF TRANSGENDER RULES

1. Introduction

- 1.1.1 Through the present regulations for the Eligibility of Transgender Athletes (“WKF Transgender Rules”), the World Karate Federation (WKF) aims at creating an adequate path for transgender athletes in the sport of Karate while respecting their gender identity. These guidelines are bound to the following principles:
- 1.1.2 It is the aim of WKF to provide equal opportunities for all Athletes to participate in Karate and guarantee fair competition conditions, thus also motivating transgender athletes to commit and excel in sport, inspiring new generations to join the sport and likewise aspire to excellence. “Transgender” refers to a person whose gender identity is different to their biological sex (regardless of whether this is pre- or post-puberty or if this person has undergone medical intervention). A “male transgender” is a person whose biological sex is female and whose gender identity is male; a “female transgender” is a person whose biological sex is male and whose gender identity is female.
- 1.1.3 Biological sex is a determining factor of Athletic performance, men standing out over women in those Sports that mainly depend on neuromuscular, cardiovascular and respiratory functions, and also in anthropometry, including body and limb size. The magnitude of the performance gap between men and women varies depending on the sport and competence, however this gap becomes evident since the beginning of puberty. The difference in performance becomes significant in puberty and often reaches between 10-50% depending on the sport. The gap is bigger in those Sporting activities that depend on muscle mass and explosive strength, particularly in the upper body, such as those Sports that include hitting techniques. Longitudinal studies examining the effect of testosterone suppression on muscle mass and strength in transgender women show consistently very low changes, with a loss of lean body mass, muscle and strength that typically rises to 5% after 12 months of treatment. Therefore, the advantage of muscle experienced by transgender women reduces to a minimum when testosterone is suppressed. A biologically female athlete cannot enhance that advantage through training nor nutrition, neither can this athlete take additional testosterone, as it is a prohibited substance under the WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) Code. The substantial difference in sport performance starting with the puberty means that the only way to obtain the established objectives is to maintain separate sport classes (competition categories) for male and female Athletes. This difference is due to the physical conditions of male Athletes derived from their testicles, that produce much higher testosterone levels than ovaries.
- 1.1.4 WKF recognises that transgender Athletes may wish to take part in Karate competition in a competition category coherent with their gender identity. WKF respects the dignity of all persons, including transgender Athletes. At the same time, WKF wishes for the sport of Karate to be as inclusive as possible and wishes to promote and provide a clear path for the



WORLD KARATE FEDERATION

participation in the sport for all. Therefore, WKF looks to regulate the participation of all under the minimum necessary conditions that provide fair competition for all at elite level.

- 1.1.5 These Transgender Rules have been established with the sole objective to attain the aforementioned goals. They do not intend to serve as a judgement or question any issues over gender identity of any athlete. On the contrary, dignity and privacy of transgender Athletes must be respected and preserved and, accordingly, any cases that may arise under the present Transgender Rules shall be treated in a confidential manner, recognising the sensitivity of such issues.
- 1.2 The present Transgender Rules will come into effect as of 1st January 2025, substituting previously existing notes on Transgender Athletes (October 2020 and August 2022), and with immediate and full application of all cases within their scope of action. They will be subject to regular revisions and may be amended following such revisions as to consider any new evidence and/or relevant scientific or medical developments.
- 1.3 Taking into consideration that these Transgender Rules will be applied worldwide, regulating the conditions of participation in competitions that take place all over the world, whenever possible, they shall be interpreted and applied independently to national or local laws, being considered as an independent and autonomous text, so that they protect and promote the above-mentioned principles overall. In case of any issues arising that are not covered by the present guidelines, they will be treated by WKF in the same line.

2. Scope of application

- 2.1.1 In order to be eligible for competing in the WKF competition category coherent with the relevant gender identity, a transgender athlete accepts the following eligibility criteria:
 - 2.1.1 To fully comply with the present Transgender Rules;
 - 2.1.2 To cooperate swiftly and in good faith with the WKF Medical Commission and the Expert Panel to comply with the below responsibilities under the Transgender Rules, including:
 - 2.1.2.1 To provide all information and evidence requested by the Medical Commission and/or Expert Panel to assess the fulfilment of the present Transgender Rules, including to undergo any testing required in alignment with the Transgender Rules
 - 2.1.2.2 To ensure that all information and evidence provided by themselves or on their behalf to the Medical Commission and/or Expert Panel are accurate and complete and that no relevant details are withheld; and
 - 2.1.2.3 To agree and ensure the sharing of any information or evidence by their doctor(s) to the Medical Commission and/or Expert Panel that is considered necessary for their evaluation;



WORLD KARATE FEDERATION

- 2.1.3 To cooperate (to the necessary maximum extent and without getting in conflict with applicable law) for the gathering, processing, sharing and use of information (including sensitive personal information), as required to implement and apply the present Transgender Rules in an effective and efficient manner;
- 2.1.4 To fully accept the validity of these Transgender Regulations or of any decision made under these Transgender Regulations and accept that may not be challenged or disputed in court. Instead, such challenge may only be brought by way of challenge or appeal in front of the CAS;
- 2.1.5 To provide written confirmation of the agreement with the Transgender Rules 2.1.1 to 2.1.4 upon request of WKF. Nonetheless, the acceptance of the present Transgender Rules is automatically given as a consequence of participating in Karate competition and is effective and binding, regardless of the written confirmation.
- 2.2 All cases arising under the current Transgender Rules will be treated by the WKF Medical Commission and the Expert Panel, instead of the athlete's relevant National Federation (or any other body), unless the Medical Commission specifically requests their assistance in relation to a particular case. Each National Federation (NF) shall cooperate and support WKF in a prompt and complete manner through the application process in Compliance with the present Transgender Rules (including to evaluations and investigation under the Transgender Rules), whilst strictly observing the confidentiality rules described below. Also, the NFs shall ensure that any transgender athlete registered under their own legislation, is also eligible to compete at WKF level under the Transgender Rules.
- 2.3 NFs can adopt their own regulations to determine the eligibility of transgender athletes competing at the level of their NF, other than WKF events. However, it should be clarified that:
 - 2.3.1 The actions undertaken by the National Federations at a national level will not interfere the eligibility of these transgender athletes to compete at WKF level, as such eligibility will solely be determined by the present Transgender Rules by WKF.
 - 2.3.2 In those cases in which a National Federation decides to allow a transgender athlete to compete at their own events in a competition category coherent with their gender identity, without fulfilling the requirements set out in these Transgender Rules, the WKF will not recognise the eligibility of the said athlete for competition at WKF level or appear in WKF Rankings.
- 2.4 The dignity of each individual shall be respected. Any form of abuse and/or harassment is prohibited. This is applicable in particular (but not exclusively) to the following:
 - 2.4.1 Any person or entity providing information to the Medical Commission and/or Expert Panel for consideration under these Transgender Rules shall:



WORLD KARATE FEDERATION

2.4.1.1 Ensure that information is precise and complete; and

2.4.1.2 Not provide any information in bad faith in order to harass, stigmatize or harm in any way any athlete or with any other improper objective.

2.4.2 No stigmatization nor discrimination motivated by gender identity issues will be tolerated. In particular, persecution or campaigns against an athlete simply because of their appearance not adjusting to gender stereotypes are unacceptable. Any such behaviour will be considered a serious violation of these Transgender Rules and the Code of Ethics, the same as any violation of the confidentiality provisions established herein.

2.5 For the purpose of these Transgender Rules, all testosterone blood tests shall be made through liquid chromatography coupled to mass spectrometry

3. Eligibility requirements for Transgender Athletes

3A. Eligibility requirements for male transgender athletes

3.1 In order to be eligible to compete in male categories in WKF events, and to be included in the male world ranking, a male transgender athlete is required to provide a written and signed declaration at least 1 (one) year prior to first competition in a format accepted by the WKF Medical Commission, indicating that the gender identity is male. Upon receipt of the said declaration, the Medical Commission will at its earliest convenience issue a written certificate confirming the eligibility of the athlete to compete in male categories in WKF events.

3B. Eligibility requirements for female transgender athletes

3.2 In order to be eligible to compete in female categories in WKF events, and to be included in the female world ranking, a female transgender athlete is required to comply with each of the following criteria altogether (jointly, the "Eligibility requirements for female transgender athletes"), to satisfaction of the Medical Commission and Expert Panel:

3.2.1 To issue a declaration in a format at least 1 (one) year prior to first competition accepted by the WKF Medical Commission, indicating that the gender identity is female.

3.2.2 They shall not have undergone any male puberty phase beyond Tanner stage 2 or after 12 years (whatever occurs first).

3.2.3 Since puberty, they shall have kept serum testosterone levels under 2.5 nmol/L.

3.2.4 The athlete's total serum testosterone level shall remain under 2.5 nmol/L continuously for at least 12 (twelve) months prior to first competition and shall remain under 2.5 nmol/L at all times (both out and in competition) to retain their right of eligibility for competition in female categories in WKF events.



WORLD KARATE FEDERATION

These conditions will be monitored by unannounced out-of-competition testing at least 4 times a year, for which the athlete shall make the Whereabouts available to WKF on ADAMS. The athlete's National Federation shall cover all cost for testing prior to the first competition. In the event of non-compliance, in the form of 3 missing Whereabouts filings within 12 (twelve) months, missed test, refusal of payment, or serum testosterone levels above 2.5 nmol/L, the athlete's eligibility for female competition will be suspended for 12 (twelve) months. Eligibility will be reinstated once all conditions have been met, suspension served, costs covered, testosterone levels served as above, Whereabouts filed.

After completing WKF eligibility criteria, the athlete can proceed with the TUE application fulfilling the requirements described in the most up-to-date WADA Guidelines and Checklists for Transgender Athletes.

3C. Requirements applicable to all transgender athletes

3.3 For the avoidance of doubt:

3.3.1 No athlete is obliged to undergo any evaluation and/or medical treatment under these Transgender Rules. It is the responsibility of the athlete, in close consultation with their medical team, to decide on the convenience or proceeding with any evaluation and/or treatment.

3.3.2 There are no further special requirements (beyond the ones described in the Eligibility requirements for transgender athletes) that a transgender athlete needs to comply with to participate in WKF events in a competition category coherent with their gender identity. In particular, none of the below are required for a transgender athlete to be eligible in a WKF competition in a category coherent with their gender identity:

3.3.2.1 Legal recognition of the athlete's gender identity; or

3.3.2.2 Surgical anatomic changes.

3.4 Once a transgender athlete has fulfilled the relevant eligibility requirements established above, and that the athlete has started competing in WKF events in a category coherent with their gender identity, the athlete will not be allowed to participate in a different gender category in WKF events, unless (a) at least 4 (four) years have passed since the last WKF event in which they competed as transgender athlete; and (b) they fulfil all conditions to be eligible in the other gender category.

4. CONTINUING PARTICIPATION

While all athletes have their right place in Karate, WKF recognises that the application of the Transgender Rules may not allow certain individuals to compete in the category that best aligns with their legal gender, gender identity or gender expression. All those choosing not to compete due to the eligibility standards are however encouraged to participate in WKF events in different roles, such as coaches, Referees, administrators and/or to seek other forms to be involved in Karate.