

NCAA & Lia Thomas



- **Lia Thomas** competed for the University of Pennsylvania’s women’s swim team after previously competing on the men’s team. Thomas became the **first openly transgender athlete to win an NCAA Division I championship** in March 2022 in the women’s 500-yard freestyle.
- Thomas’s participation and success sparked widespread debate about fairness in women’s sports, with critics pointing to physiological advantages associated with puberty experienced as male. Supporters argue for inclusion and respect for gender identity.
- In **2025, Penn agreed in a federal settlement to bar transgender women from women’s intercollegiate athletics**, restore women’s records retroactively where appropriate, and apologize to affected athletes — part of a broader federal push under Title IX enforcement.
- Claims that the NCAA “transferred Lia Thomas’ medals to other athletes” are false. The NCAA still shows Thomas’ official finishes in the 2022 championship.

Event	National Rankings before Transition (Men’s Division)	National Rankings after Transition (Women’s Division) 2021-2022
200-yard freestyle	554 th	5 th
500-yard freestyle	65 th	1 st
1,650-yard freestyle	32 nd	8 th

Olympic & International Rules

- The **Olympic Committee and many international federations** have policies that set conditions for transgender athletes (often involving testosterone levels and eligibility windows). These are frequently updated and vary by sport.
- For example, World Aquatics now has policies that limit eligibility for transgender women to compete in elite events, and those rules have been upheld in arbitration against challenges by athletes including Thomas.
- **February 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympics:** The IOC’s transgender eligibility policy remains sport-specific and inconsistent across federations at these Games, but a universal framework is expected soon.
- **Early 2026 — IOC Policy:** The IOC plans to release comprehensive **new eligibility criteria** for transgender athletes, aiming to balance inclusion with protection of women’s categories.

United Nations Report

- According to a report from the United Nations, by March 30th of 2024, **over 600 female athletes** in more than **400 competitions** have **lost more than 890 medals in 29 different sports**

World's Strongest Woman Title Incorrectly Awarded After Eligibility Violation

- British strongwoman Andrea Thompson was titled World's Strongest Woman after the original winner, American Jammie Booker, was disqualified for violating competition rules requiring athletes to compete in the category matching their biological sex at birth which left Thompson without her rightful podium moment and costing other female competitors placements, advancement to later competition days, and top-10 world rankings.

High School Sports & Maine

- As of February 2, 2026, over 82,000 signatures from Maine voters (about 14,000 more than the number required) were gathered to force a statewide vote on the issue. The Trump administration is currently suing Maine over the state's policies allowing transgender athletes to participate in sports in a way that aligns with their gender identity.

High School Sports & Connecticut

- State championship sprinter recounts competing and losing titles and opportunities to male-bodied runners in girls' track, the psychological and recruiting harms that followed, and her ongoing legal fight, under Title IX, to defend female athletes' right to fair competition.
- New England sprinter specifically lost four women's state championship titles, two All New England awards, more than a dozen podium placements, qualification spots for elite meets, and visibility in front of college scouts, losses that directly affected college recruitment and scholarship opportunities.

Specific Injury Reports

- North Carolina high school athlete Payton McNabb (2022) suffered debilitating injuries after suffering a forceful blow to the head from a volleyball spike by a biological male on the opposing teams. Her short- and long-term injuries include impaired vision, partial paralysis on her right side, balance issues, anxiety, and depression.
- Massachusetts high school athlete (2023) suffered a lifted shot to the face in a field hockey game from a biological male competing against all girls. The injured student athlete suffered facial and dental injuries.
- Massachusetts girls high school basketball game results in a halftime forfeit after a transgender girl on the opposing team injured four players out of a twelve player roster.

Different Sports have Variable Physical Requirements:

- Volleyball: net height differs between women's and men's competition
- Basketball: Court size and ball size difference in the women's game.
- Lacrosse: rules and contact allowances differ by sex category, gear for boys' lacrosse include shoulder pads, gloves, helmets, arm guards. Girls' equipment includes slimmer gloves, goggles or a helmet with mouth guards.
- Weightlifting: Girls/women lift higher standard weights. Barbell diameters are smaller in women's competitions to improve grip.
- Track & Field: Girls/women compete with lighter implements: Shot put, discus, hammer, and javelin all weigh less than boys'/men's versions. Hurdle heights are lower in girls' events to reflect average differences in stride length and power.

U.S. Supreme Court

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments January 13, 2026, in *Little v. Hecox* and *West Virginia v. B.P.J.* which challenge laws that reserve women's and girls' sports divisions in government schools exclusively for females.

2025 — Major U.S. Policy Shifts & Legal Actions

- **Feb 5, 2025**: President Donald Trump signs **Executive Order 14201** (“**Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports**”), instructing federal agencies to enforce Title IX based on biological sex.
- **Feb 2025 — NCAA Policy Change**: The NCAA updates its participation rules to restrict competition in women's sports to athletes **assigned female at birth**, effective immediately, in response to federal direction.
- **Mar 2025 — Maine Title IX Enforcement**: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issue a Title IX violation notice to Maine for allowing transgender girls to compete in girls' sports under state law; the state refuses to comply with federal demands.
- **Jul 1, 2025 — UPenn Resolution**: The University of Pennsylvania agrees with the U.S. Department of Education to ban transgender athletes from women's intercollegiate sports going forward and plans to update swimming records to reflect current eligibility guidelines — including notes on times set by Lia Thomas under earlier rules.
- **Sep 15, 2025 — USA Cycling Ban**: USA Cycling adopts a policy banning transgender athletes from female categories at national events, aligning with broader national sports policy shifts.
- **Late 2025**: Several U.S. states' attorneys general (across ~28 states) urge the NCAA to erase records and titles earned by transgender athletes — but the NCAA has not indicated it will remove official championships.

Support:

- **Martina Navratilova**, a Czech-American tennis player, has taken a firm stance against trans inclusion in women and girls' sports.
- **Caitlyn Jenner**, former Olympic athlete, who came out as a trans woman in 2015, is a longtime opponent of trans athletes from competing in women's sports.
- **ICONS – Independent Council on Women's Sports** position is to render any biological males ineligible to compete against female athletes.
- **WOLFF**- Women's Liberation Front, organization who works to protect and restore and advance the rights of women and girls.
- **Riley Gaines**- Ambassador for Independence Women's Forum, who competed against Thomas as a member of the University of Kentucky women's swim team.
- **Stephanie Turner**- Fencer from the University of Maryland who took a stand in opposition to competing against transgender athletes.