

British Orienteering Trans Competition Policy

Introduction and policy statement

British Orienteering is committed to creating an inclusive environment that will provide opportunities and enjoyment for everyone.

British Orienteering has developed this competition policy with respect to participation by trans individuals. This includes anyone whose gender identity or expression is different from the sex assigned to them at birth, including (but not limited to) people who identify as transgender, gender-fluid or non-binary.

In developing this policy, British Orienteering have taken account of scientific research, the International Orienteering Federation (“IOF”) Transgender Policy, the [UK’s Sports Councils Guidance for Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport](#), discussions that we have had with several partner NGBs, the UK Supreme Court ruling in April 2025 and legal advice.

Legal framework

British Orienteering is responsible for regulating within its jurisdiction (the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man) the participation of persons as competitors in Foot Orienteering, Ski Orienteering and Trail Orienteering. Foot Orienteering and Ski Orienteering are “gender-affected” activities within the meaning of [section 195 of the Equality Act 2010](#) in the United Kingdom and section 154 of the [Equality Act 2017](#) in the Isle of Man (“the Equality Acts”), because they are sports of a competitive nature 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.

The Equality Acts provide exemptions in relation to participation by trans people as competitors in a “gender-affected” activity where this is necessary to secure either fair competition or the safety of competitors. Participation by trans people in orienteering does not present an increased risk to the safety of competitors. This policy therefore aims to balance the inclusion of trans participants with the need to secure fair competition.

Note that “gender-affected” in the legislation actually refers to the effects of biological sex on performance.

Policy scope

This policy governs participation by trans people as competitors in Foot Orienteering and Ski Orienteering events that are registered with British Orienteering and are held in accordance with the [British Orienteering Rules of Orienteering](#).

This policy does not apply to Trail Orienteering because it is not a “gender-affected” activity and does not have male and female categories.

Events operating under IOF Rules, such as World Ranking Events, will be subject to the [IOF Transgender Policy](#).

Date of implementation

This version of the policy has effect from 1 June 2026.

Policy review

British Orienteering recognises that policy relating to participation by trans people in sport continues to develop. This policy will therefore be reviewed from time to time to ensure best practice is continued.

Privacy and data sharing

Everyone involved in determining an individual's eligibility to compete under this policy will respect the confidentiality of the matter and the individual's right to privacy. All information about a person's gender identity and sex will be managed in accordance with British Orienteering's Privacy Policy, UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and, where relevant, the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

Contact details and reporting

British Orienteering welcomes feedback on this policy via safeguarding@britishorienteering.org.uk.

British Orienteering urges any person involved within orienteering who has experienced or witnessed transphobic abuse to report it immediately. Please contact us via safeguarding@britishorienteering.org.uk.

All enquiries regarding participation by a trans person as a competitor at an orienteering event should be made via email to safeguarding@britishorienteering.org.uk. Event officials, volunteers or other participants must not in any circumstances challenge an individual's participation as a competitor at an event under this policy at the event itself.

Policy

Definitions

In this policy:

- **“Gender”** means gender identity or expression.
- **“Sex”** means biological sex being the sex assigned at birth.
- **“Age Group”** means the combination of M or W with numbers as defined in BO Rule 2.7 e.g. M12: a male aged 11 or 12, W40: a female aged 40 to 44.
- **“Entry Class”** means the class options that are offered when entering an event e.g. M50, W16A, MV, WUV, Green, Course 4 Other, Long, Short, 60 minute Score.

The Entry Class is the prime format in which the results will be displayed.

An Entry Class that includes an age is restricted to those of the appropriate age e.g. M50 is restricted to those aged 50 and older, W16A is restricted to those aged 16 and younger, MV is restricted to those age 40 and older, WUV is restricted to those aged 65 and older. Those not of an appropriate age are only allowed to enter those classes if they declare themselves non-competitive.

Entry Classes for female competitors are prefixed by **“W”** and are restricted to those whose biological sex at birth was female.

An Entry Class prefixed by **“M”** is unrestricted by sex.

Those whose biological sex at birth was not female are only allowed to enter an Entry Class prefixed by **“W”** if they declare themselves non-competitive.

An Entry Class which does not specify sex or age is unrestricted.

At many events, a variety of Entry Classes are offered, some of which are restricted and others which are not.

Individuals are free to self-identify as male or female on the British Orienteering database or when entering an event without a requirement for further evidence. That, along with their date of birth, determines their Age Group which appears against their name in results.

Transgender females (persons whose gender is female but whose biological sex at birth was male) who have identified themselves as female on the British Orienteering database (or if non-members, have identified themselves as female as they enter) have the following options when entering an event where the Entry Class is restricted by sex:

1. Enter an Entry Class that is not restricted by sex such as Green, Course 4 other or 60-minute Score; this includes the male Entry Class; or
2. Enter a female Entry Class and declare themselves non-competitive by notifying the race organiser; if they are part of a team in a female Entry Class, the team must be declared non-competitive.

Note: In order to facilitate the above options, in competitions where the main Entry Classes specify sex and

age, but where competitors are actually free to run any course, organisers must offer additional unrestricted Entry Classes such as “Course 4 other”.

Any athlete who would not be eligible to compete in the female category under this policy should not be eligible to win titles, medals, prizes or trophies designated for females, either individually or as part of a team. Competitors may assume that a competition will be following this recommendation unless the organiser has explicitly stated otherwise.

In individual races at Level C and above, BO members aged 16+ are eligible to gain BO Ranking points.

In the female Ranking List (seen by filtering by Female), only those eligible to compete in the female category will appear. To facilitate this, any person who has declared themselves female on the British Orienteering database but whose biological sex at birth was male, must declare that in their Membership Profile. Such a declaration will not be publicly visible.

Non-competitive participants are not eligible for ranking points.

Note that in qualification-race competitions, non-competitive athletes will not be eligible to compete in the A-final.

Any person seeking selection to the British Orienteering Performance Pathway Programme in the female category and/or seeking selection by British Orienteering for international competitions in the female category must be eligible to compete in the female category under the IOF Transgender Policy in order to be eligible for selection. This is to ensure that selected individuals are eligible to compete in the relevant international competition(s).

All participants may be subject to doping control testing under the UK Anti-Doping Rules. Hormone treatments used for the purpose of gender reassignment may be prohibited under the World Anti-Doping Agency Code. Any participants using hormone treatments for the purpose of gender reassignment are therefore encouraged to contact UK Anti-Doping to determine whether they are required to apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption.