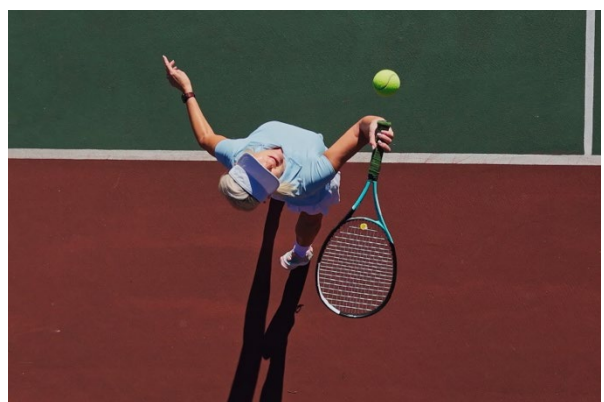


Transgender and gender-diverse inclusion and safety in Canadian Sports, 2026



Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

Transgender and gender-diverse inclusion and safety in Canadian Sports, 2026

Everyone deserves dignity and inclusion, especially in sports.

Trans and gender-diverse people have always participated in sports and championed for safer, more inclusive practices locally and globally. Sadly, today, anti-Trans policies, rooted in disinformation and discrimination, are persecuting and ostracizing Trans athletes, like the International Olympic Committee's recent policy decision, which essentially bans Canadian Transgender women from competing at the Olympics¹. In Alberta, Bill 29 created targeted exclusionary practices that violate the basic rights of children, youth and Trans people's basic human rights and creates dangerous practices like forced "outing" and physical monitoring of girls and women who are athletes².

"A glimmer of hope I got was seeing Harrison Brown come out in the NWHL as a trans man and the support and acceptance that he got that showed me that there was a possibility that I could potentially come out and be supported and have acceptance and play the game that I love [...] that I could come out and be unburdened." – [Jessica Platt, retired professional hockey player](#)

Many government officials, athletes, educators, and experts have spoken out publicly about the rise of disinformation surrounding Trans inclusion in sport and the subsequent ideologically motivated policies we are experiencing. For example, Dr. Charles D.T. Macaulay, professor in the Department of Management at the Gordon S. Lang School of Business and Economics, said, "This policy (referring to the Olympic ban on Trans women athletes) is unnecessary, I have yet to come across any study that has systematically demonstrated that trans women have some sort of physical, athletic

¹ Canadian Civil Liberties Association (2026). Olympic Committee's New Eligibility Rules Exclude Transgender Athletes and Expand Policing of Women's Bodies. <https://ccla.org/press-release/olympic-committees-new-eligibility-rules-exclude-transgender-athletes-and-expands-policing-of-womens-bodies/>

² EGale Canada (2025). <https://egale.ca/egale-in-action/condemn-bill29-sept5/>

or competitive advantage in sports, in fact, this negates the genealogical, biological and anatomical diversity that exists across humanity.”³

As Canadian Women in Sport have also noted, “There are strong guidelines that help avoid discrimination **without** excluding trans athletes from the gender category they identify with⁴.”

There have also been several calls to the federal government of Canada to create clear national standards in response to exclusionary sport policies.

Bruce Kidd is a professor emeritus of sport policy and a former ombudsperson at the University of Toronto and an honorary member of the Canadian Olympic Committee and Marcus Mazzucco, an adjunct lecturer of sports law at the University of Toronto and an advisory board member of the Centre for Sport Policy Studies, they say that,

“In keeping with its commitment to gender inclusion and its longstanding opposition to sex testing in international sport, the federal government must denounce efforts to ban transgender women and women with sex variations from women’s sport⁵”.

They advocate for:

- Unrestricted gender inclusion is mandatory for federally funded sports organizations.
- fund more scientific research into the issue; and
- prohibit international sports events from being held in Canada if they restrict or exclude transgender women athletes or women athletes with sex variations⁶.”

Creating inclusion and safety is paramount in all sports, for everyone. Currently, all sport organizations in Canada are responsible to provincial and territorial human rights

³ University of Guelph (2026). ‘Unnecessary’: Olympic Ban on Trans Women Athletes Harmful for Everyone, Says Researcher <https://news.uoguelph.ca/2026/04/unnecessary-olympic-ban-on-trans-women-athletes-harmful-for-everyone/>

⁴ Canadian Women and Sport (2026). Trans Inclusion in Sport. <https://womenandsport.ca/resource/trans-inclusion-in-sport>

⁵ Kidd, B. & Mazzucco, M. (2026). Ottawa should counter bans on trans athletes in sport. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/2026/03/womens-sport-sex-testing-canada/>

⁶ Ibid.

legislation, which in most cases are designed to protect against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. This is important for organizations to reinforce or support their inclusion efforts and alignment with provincial policies, so that they do not discriminate on legislatively protected grounds⁷.



Consider this, rather than creating a separate inclusion policy for Trans athletes, the preferred option is to ensure existing organizational documents, policies, and practices reference the organization's commitment to inclusive practices and the respect of human rights, privacy and safety for all⁸. Always consult with the Trans and gender-diverse athletes and community members in your organization first.

Here are some other important suggestions for organizations to consider:

- Use preferred names, gender markers to maintain records, policies and contracts in ways that respect privacy and uphold human rights.
- The Ontario Human Rights Commission can support organizations build policies for transitioning athletes as well. They suggest guidelines that include washroom and change room policies, dress code policy, confidentiality and privacy, anti-harassment and training for coaches and teams (Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2024).

Inclusive washrooms and facilities in sports

Access to washrooms is a basic human right at the core of dignity and access for all, yet washrooms cause barriers and threats commonly and unjustly for Trans people⁹. Restrictive policies that exclude Trans and gender-diverse athletes from using washrooms or changerooms that are consistent with their gender identity are

⁷ Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport. (2024). *Creating inclusive environments for trans participants in Canadian sport: Guidance for sport organizations*. <https://sportpei.pe.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/cces-transinclusionpolicyguidance-e-.pdf>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ontario Human Rights Commission. Preventing and Responding to Discrimination. <https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression/13-preventing-and>

inequitable and segregating¹⁰. Normalizing segregation and discrimination have lasting negative impacts on individuals, teams and society at large. The disinformation around 'safety concerns' that propels these policies has been debunked in research globally, demonstrating fear over facts¹¹. Furthermore, privacy matters to everyone, research has also found that most people prefer individual stalls, private locker rooms regardless of their gender identity or expression¹².

Some options to consider for inclusive washrooms and physical spaces

1. Normalizing inclusive washrooms and facilities begins with intentional design, signage, policies and education; universal design options can create accessibility for all people.
2. If a cisgender person is uncomfortable sharing washrooms or facilities with a Trans teammate, then they should be asked to make alternative arrangements not the Trans athlete to ensure we are upholding protected grounds and human rights.¹³
3. Private spaces are important for everyone including, if possible, private changing rooms, shower stalls even within gendered change rooms¹⁴.
4. Gender-inclusive washrooms are often designed to be welcoming and safe for all people, including all types of bodies and abilities¹⁵.

Inclusive design seeks to improve privacy, safety, and accessibility while also supporting the option of both gendered and gender-neutral facilities.

¹⁰ Cunningham, G. B., Buzuvis, E., & Mosier, C. (2018). Inclusive Spaces and Locker Rooms for Transgender Athletes. *Kinesiology Review*, 7(4), 365-374. Retrieved Apr 3, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1123/kr.2017-0062>

¹¹ Grinberg, E., & Stewart, D. (2017, March). 3 myths that shape the transgender bathroom debate. *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/07/health/transgender-bathroom-law-facts-myths/index.html>

¹² Cunningham, G. B., Buzuvis, E., & Mosier, C. (2018). Inclusive Spaces and Locker Rooms for Transgender Athletes. *Kinesiology Review*, 7(4), 365-374. Retrieved Apr 3, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1123/kr.2017-0062>

¹³ Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport. (2024). *Creating inclusive environments for trans participants in Canadian sport: Guidance for sport organizations*. <https://sportpei.pe.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/cces-transinclusionpolicyguidance-e-.pdf>

¹⁴ Toronto Metropolitan University (2026). <https://www.torontomu.ca/recreation/services/Inclusive-accessible-change-spaces/#!accordion-1723670259020-recreation---athletics-centre--rac->

¹⁵ *Gender-inclusive washrooms in Canadian schools: A case study*. (n.d.). Vancouver Island University. <https://www.viurrspace.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/196e697d-57fc-4015-95d6-894ff020f539/content>



Queen's University released a report titled Research and Recommendations for Gender-Inclusive Washrooms and Changerooms; they recommended short-term and long-term steps towards inclusion.¹⁶

We invite our employee partners to join us in the CCDI Community HUB where we share resources and information about DEIA including upcoming new resources on Trans and 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion and safety.

Important external resources to explore:

- [The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sports released a guide called Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport](#) that has incredible resources for coaches, coordinators, decision makers and allies!
- ['This is people's lives': Canadian soccer star Quinn continues trans advocacy](#)
- [Harrison Browne's Film Pink Light To Premiere At Toronto International Film Festival](#)
- Egale Canada: [2SLGBTQI Sport Inclusion: Milano Cortina 2026](#)
- [Athletics Canada Policy on Transgender and Gender Diversity Inclusion](#)
- The organizations that stood up to Alberta: [Inclusive Policies from Sports Organizations in Canada](#)
- [Countermeasures to oppose Alberta's use of the notwithstanding clause to exclude transgender athletes from women's sport](#)
- [Design Strategies for Restroom & Locker Room Facilities](#)
- [Transitioning Employers: A survey of policies and practices for trans inclusive workplaces](#), Pride at Work Canada
- [Get the Facts: Trans Inclusion in Sports](#), Gender Justice
- [Skate Canada Trans Inclusion Protocol](#)
- [Transgender inclusion policy](#), Football Canada
- [Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport: Policy and Practice Template for Sport Organizations](#)

¹⁶ Queen's University. (2023). Report on gender-inclusive washrooms and changerooms: Short- and long-term application of inclusive design at Queen's.
https://www.queensu.ca/vpcei/sites/vpceiwww/files/uploaded_images/Washroom%20Report%20-%20Digital.pdf