



## ***Referee Guidance for Transgender and Genderqueer Athletes***

Pacific Northwest Swimming is a leader amongst LSCs when it comes to supporting swimmers regardless of race, income, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation. Providing an open, safe and welcoming environment for transgender and genderqueer athletes should be a natural continuation of such support for our athletes. As referees are some of our most impactful leaders, we hope this packet will provide tools to assist you in maintaining a welcoming environment, and empower you to set a positive example for our transgender and genderqueer athletes, as well as all PNS members within the GBLTQ community.

### **Overly-Simplified Definitions**

Sex and sexual identity is based on genitalia one is born with. Gender identity is based on one's brains, emotions and feelings. Many people are *cisgender*—which means that your gender identity matches your genitalia, e.g., born physically male and brain identifies as male. Some people are *transgender*—meaning gender identity does not match genitalia, e.g., born physically male but brain identifies as female. There are also people who do not identify as either male or female, or their identity is fluid. These people may identify as *nonbinary* or *genderqueer*). Children usually realize their gender identity around 3 to 5 years of age.

### **Suggested Competition Protocols**

Any athlete who needs accommodation(s) regarding rules and/or logistics shall—either themselves or through a coach—brief the meet referee on what accommodations they need. The referee shall maintain the athlete's privacy however possible.

Suits – *To maintain athlete privacy and to avoid athlete embarrassment, all suit disqualification notifications should go directly to the coach rather than the athlete, regardless of gender identity.* Swimmers may wear any FINA-approved suit they are comfortable in. If an athlete wants to wear a suit that does not traditionally conform to rules for a specific event (e.g., a suit above the naval in male events or non-FINA-approved suits), there is a national waiver process. The referee shall inform the Administrative Official to disregard any related disqualifications that are submitted for the athlete. Justification for such disregard, e.g., “they are transgender,” shall not be necessary, and no discussion regarding athlete accommodations should happen with other officials.

Locker-rooms – Usually locker-rooms with stalls provide sufficient privacy for all individuals. Ideally each facility will also have a gender-neutral or “family” restroom available. All athletes and spectators are encouraged to use the restroom consistent with their gender identity. That means if a transgender male swimmer chooses to use the male restroom, they can do so. If another swimmer or spectator is uncomfortable with changing in the same restroom as a transgender athlete, the other swimmer is encouraged to use the gender-neutral or “family” restroom. At no time may a transgender athlete be told which locker-room they must use.

Pronouns – When an athlete shares their preferred pronouns to you, purposely using contrary pronouns is a form of discrimination and is not acceptable. For more information about pronouns, please refer to the PNS “Gender Pronouns – Frequently Asked Questions” sheet.

### **Support Resources**

USA Swimming has support and resources for you. Please feel free to contact any of the below for assistance.

PNS Officials Chair: John Gagliardo ([officials@pns.org](mailto:officials@pns.org); 206-291-4026)

PNS PNS D&I Chair: Dane Wolfrom ([diversity@pns.org](mailto:diversity@pns.org); 253-381-8389)

PNS Safe Sport Chair: Cory Keller ([safesport@pns.org](mailto:safesport@pns.org))

USA Swimming D&I: MJ Truex ([mtruex@usaswimming.org](mailto:mtruex@usaswimming.org))

USA Swimming Safe Sport: Susan Woessner ([swoessner@usaswimming.org](mailto:swoessner@usaswimming.org); 719-332-0184)