

Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport

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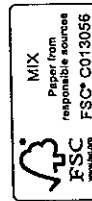
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Between stigmatization and empowerment

Meanings of physical activity and sport in the lives of transgender people

Agnes Elling and Kiki Collot d'Escury

Physical activity and sport are generally regarded as important social practices that not only contribute to one's health, but also to personal empowerment and social connectedness for both people belonging to hegemonic social status groups and minority groups. Critical scholars have acknowledged these potentials of sport, but also argued and convincingly illustrated how especially mainstream competitive sport simultaneously plays a broader societal role in constructing and reproducing social inequalities, including those relating to gender and sexuality (e.g. Anderson 2014; Connell 2005; Hargreaves 1994; Travers 2008). This leads to often complex dynamics of personal embodied meanings and mechanisms of social in- and exclusion in the world of recreational physical activity and sport (e.g. Bridel and Rail 2007; Wellard 2016). For transgender people, taking part in sport with its binary gender structures (e.g. competitions, changing rooms) and dominant gender/sexuality discourses therefore provides extra challenges (Travers 2008).

Although we recognize there is a small, but growing group of non-binary transgender people, in this chapter we mainly focus on those persons with an ambivalent or incongruent gender identity combined with unease about their body and the wish or intense need to (partially) change their gender of birth through hormone treatment and/or surgery (Cohen-Kettenis 2013; Kuyper, 2012).¹ In medical terms such people are referred to as experiencing 'gender dysphoria' (DSM-V) or a gender identity disorder (DSM-III). In colloquial language, they are regarded as having been 'born inside the wrong body'. One of the world's leading clinics in offering medical and social support for people – including adolescents – in the process of gender transitioning, the Center of Expertise for Gender Dysphoria, Free University Medical Centre, is based in Amsterdam.

As in other Western countries, positive developments have occurred in the Netherlands regarding the legislation, visibility and emancipation of transgender people (e.g. Balzar and Hutta 2012; Cohen-Kettenis 2013; Whittle *et al.* 2008). Simultaneously, studies identified that transgender people are still very vulnerable to prejudice, stigmatization and discrimination,

since they live outside the hegemonic sex/gender binary (see also FRA 2013). Next to equal treatment in employment, education, and health care, the Transgender Network Netherlands (TNN) recognizes participation and acceptance in leisure activities like physical activity and sports as important aspects of societal inclusion. Following international legislation aimed at the recognition of human rights for transgender people, in 2003 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) adopted regulations for the conditioned inclusion of 'fully transitioned' transgender people in elite competitive sport (UK Sport, 2009).² To regulate 'gender trouble' and promote further inclusion of transgender people at lower competitive levels and in recreational sport, adjusted guidelines have been adopted by national sport federations. In 2015 the Dutch Sports Federation (NOC*NSF) produced an advisory document for sports federations and clubs, in cooperation with TNN.³

In this chapter, we present the findings of two explorative, qualitative studies about the experiences in physical activities and sports among trans men and trans women. These expand the existing body of knowledge around transgender participation in sport. To date, this has mainly consisted of critical – post-structuralist/feminist/queer – theoretical perspectives focused on the disciplinary and exclusionary processes and experienced limitations for transgender people in (mainstream) competitive sports (for example, Caudwell 2012; Tagg 2012; Travers 2006; Travers and Deri 2011). Although we identify with such a critical approach, we also acknowledge other 'enfleshed' lived body-self experiences (Sparkes 1999) relating to agency, identity development and empowerment of transgender people in relation to physical activity and sports.

Critical scholars like Connell (1995) and Hargreaves (1994) argued that mainstream competitive sports are not very inclusive spaces, due to the centrality of the performative body, binary gendered structures, and hegemonic gendered/heterosexual ideologies. Although more recent research by Anderson (2014) shows that hegemonic gendered ideologies are changing, non-hegemonic or 'different' gendered bodies – like transgender bodies – are still often objectified, disciplined, or excluded. Intersex and transgender women especially face protest – mostly based on arguments of fairness – from competitors and/or the public when they participate in women's competitions (e.g. Sykes 2006). Like 'pioneer' Renee Richards, who participated – legally sanctioned – in the professional women's tennis circuit from 1977 to 1981 (see Birrell and Cole 1990), transgender female athletes are still regarded as not being 'real women' or as being 'essentially men'.⁴ We acknowledge that such 'unfair advantage discourse' (Sykes 2006) is partly based on the fear for challenges to the gender binary and doesn't recognize the social construction of both sport and the gender binary. However, we simultaneously regard the existing gender categories in current competitive sport as 'logical' categories to create a more level

playing field, based on 'real' competitive advantages for the category of biological men over women (cf. Travers 2006). Even in sport spaces with inclusive transgender policies, for example in some North American lesbian softball leagues (Travers and Deri 2011) and mixed netball in New Zealand (Tagg 2012), trans women may face protest.

Based on our research, we argue that alongside conflicts and exclusionary processes, physical activity and sport spaces also have more positive meanings for transgender people, relating to negotiating gender identity and (re)claiming embodied subjectivity (Johnson 2007, 55). What are the (changed) meanings of and body-self experiences in physical activities and sport among transgender people and in what ways are these different for trans men and trans women, and for young and adult transgender people?

Methodology

Our results are based on biographical narrative interviews with a total of thirty transgender people, varying from 12 to 51 years of age. Respondents were approached through distributed calls in (digital) transgender networks and through personal contacts. We acknowledge that our personal social characteristics as white, higher-educated cisgender women (one lesbian and one heterosexual) with competitive sporting experiences may have influenced the process of data collection. Although we may share several experiences relating to normative gender expectations in sport, we are not transgender and we are aware that we are in a position of power with regard to interpreting our subjects' experiences of gender transitioning.

At the time of their interviews, our respondents were in different phases of gender transition and had different socio-demographic backgrounds and sporting biographies. Some (mainly young people) had only just started the diagnostic route or begun taking puberty blockers, others had started hormone treatment, but not undergone surgery (yet) and some had undergone complete transitions, including genital surgery (recently or for many years). They also differed with respect to socio-demographic positions and experiences in mainstream, competitive sport before or during/after transitioning. The – mainly ethnically Euro-Dutch – interviewees lived in villages or more urban environments in different parts of the country and had different educational levels, with the adult respondents in the midst of relatively unsettled occupational careers. Many respondents, especially trans women, identified as lesbian/homosexual. Most of the younger transgender people still lived with their parents, who often played an important (and mostly positive) role in their decision to start transitioning at a younger age. One older trans man still lived with his mother and two trans men lived together with their male partners from before their transition. Three respondents had children from a former marriage.

We asked interviewees to tell us their life story, focusing particularly on their experiences with their body, gender identity, and physical activities and sports. The conversations with adult respondents lasted one to one and a half hours on average. Interviews were recorded, and fully transcribed. Interviewing younger transgender people, between the ages of 12 and 24 years old, however, often involved multiple shorter conversations, in different environments and in different ways, alternating 'face to face' interaction with conversations through e-mail, Facebook or WhatsApp. Interaction and communication often involved a mixture of talking and observing as well as participating in sporting activities together.

In line with Driessen's (2013, 252) concept of 'small talk', these different forms of communication and interaction made it easier to establish a relationship and talk about difficult and sensitive topics like gender identities, 'fleshy physicality' and feelings of confusion, shame or exclusion. Short stories, including literal citations, were constructed and sent back to the interviewees for informed consent concerning facts and (multivocal or layered) interpretations. Analysis of these stories took place through a multiple process of encoding and constant (interpersonal) comparison. We selected three central stories (Sam, Sandra, Patrick) and included the outcomes of other respondents in the analyses of central themes in their narratives of (dis)embodiment, gender (re)identification and sport.

Three body-self sporting narratives

Sam

Sam (17) is very fond of playing sports, namely, hockey, soccer and basketball. He started playing hockey with a girls' team when he was six years old. At that time, he already dressed as a boy: "I only wore jeans and a t-shirt, never a dress or a skirt or anything that was too tight and my hair was always short." At the age of eight Sam was diagnosed with 'gender dysphoria'. In the summer break between primary and high school he and his family decided he would attend high school as a 'boy'. Although he started to present himself as a boy when he went to high school, he continued to play hockey on a girls' team:

I still felt very comfortable in my hockey team. They let me wear shorts, instead of a skirt, I was really happy about that. Other kids or parents sometimes said things like "hey that's not fair, they have a boy on their team!" But I didn't really mind.

Although Sam enjoyed playing hockey, he was even better at soccer, and when he turned 12 he decided to only play soccer, where he played on a regional selection team of the national football federation. During those

years his 'trans feelings' started to become a bigger part of his life. He recalled his 'odd feelings', being present in the girls' changing room and showering together (which was compulsory): "...I felt guilty towards the other girls. Although my body wasn't different, I knew I felt different and I even preferred girls." He decided to quit playing soccer and start with basketball, "as a guy".

When he told his new basketball team about his transgender identity they all reacted very well. He changed with the other guys, felt accepted by his team and really enjoyed being able to play basketball as a boy. But at the same time, he was constantly afraid of not fitting in. He felt like he was physically lagging behind. He had just started taking puberty blockers but could not yet start with cross-sex hormones (testosterone), since the standards of care eligibility requirements in the Netherlands includes a minimum age of 16 years (WPATH 2011). So while all the other boys were physically growing his body was literally frozen in time.

I remember being pushed by an opponent and falling on the ground. My teammates immediately stood up for me but I felt so ashamed. I was afraid everyone would think I was a sissy or worse ... that I was a girl...

Sam eventually quit playing basketball because he felt so physically overwhelmed as he is "just very small for a guy".

Analysis: Sam's experience in hockey, soccer and basketball illustrate how young trans boys/men face several challenges in (competitive) sport participation during a phase in which they are physically, socially and emotionally 'migrating' to a 'new gender' (cf. Johnson 2007; Schleifer 2006). Although different from trans women, who often experience being excluded by others due to 'fairness' after transition, trans boys and men also experience issues related to fairness. Job (14) still plays soccer on a girls' team with his friends, where they all 'know'. But more and more often at games opponents and parents 'accuse' him of 'being a boy'. Although such references may be partly experienced as a compliment, since he is recognized in his 'right' gender, they may be hurtful at the same time. On the one hand, transgender boys who just started transitioning, like Sam and Job, may feel socially excluded from competitive sport participation in their gender category of birth due to their boyish looks. Similar to cisgender women who challenge norms of gender appropriate appearance, they are confronted with the unfairness discourse (Sykes 2006), even though they do not benefit from gender category related biological advantages. On the other hand, these young trans men feel excluded from participating in the boy's/men's competition, since their 'wrong' female body does not yet allow them an embodied masculinity. Simon (33) and Eric (43) recalled similar ambivalent experiences about their participation in mainstream

women's football teams before/during transitioning. After transition, trans men often feel they have physical disadvantages compared to cis-men their age, as was recalled by Sander (23), Eric (43) and Jeroen (47). After having had positive experiences in his women's football team during his (first phase of) transition Simon also looked forward to playing on a lower-level amateur men's team ('the 6th team') in the same club. His positive anticipation, like Coen's (16) first experiences on a boys' team, seem to mirror developments of inclusive masculinity in men's team sports (Anderson 2008). This is different from the elsewhere found fear of being confronted with a non-inclusive, gender- and heteronormative climate (eg trans man Finn in Caudwell 2012 or gay men who refrain from football and other men's team sports, Elling and Janssens 2009), although we do acknowledge that such forms of perceived stigma may still be similar 'real'. The sporting narratives of trans men especially illustrate the often-paradoxical experiences of inclusiveness and belonging as well as exclusionary processes of binary sex/gender structures and norms. Many have felt safe and a sense of belonging within their women's team or felt accepted in boys' teams, but simultaneously didn't completely fit due to either a too 'masculine' presence or a physical practice that couldn't keep up with 'real boys/men'.

Anne (19) identifies most as a trans woman although the way she presents herself differs. She participates in the transgender inclusive sport of Quidditch,⁵ including some non-binary transgenders. Similar to Sam, however, most of our interviewees strive not to deconstruct sex/gender binaries, but to achieve a clear public 'either-or' identity as a recognizable man or woman after transitioning, even though some may be partly critical of the binary system (cf. Roen 2001; Wilson 2002). Since most rather 'migrate' from one gender to another they could be regarded as more "conforming" instead of "transforming" transgender people (Travers 2006), although we rather acknowledge that all transgender narratives in some way are challenging the gender/sex binaries in sport. Sam's story also illustrated that the wish to be 'passable' enough is related to fear. Similar, Anne stated that she only presents herself with more womanly characteristics (e.g. clothing) when she feels comfortable enough. These examples illustrate the stigma around transgender people, since being able to pass as a man or woman lessens the likelihood of experiencing "micro-aggressions" related to gender policing that negatively impact visible transgender people (Spade 2011). Sandra's story also shows how being acknowledged and accepted as their new gender identity by others is an important condition for feelings of safety as well as pride.

Sandra

According to Sandra (41), she had lived a 'reasonably normal boys' youth', including playing football on the top boys' team of the local football club until age 18.

In those days, I did not really see that I was in the wrong body and that I wanted to do girls' things ... Before, I was really a normal boy who liked to put on girls' clothes as a kind of hobby.

At age five she started cross-dressing, but felt comfortable in her boys' body and, for example, did not mind showering with the other boys on her football team. She changed to badminton and became a member of a club, where her brother played. At the age of 35, she "started experimenting with doing things as a woman" and living a double life, with "no space left for sports". Then she decided that she did not want to live her life as a woman in secret any longer and started the official transitioning trajectory.

Sandra moved and changed jobs, although she continued singing as a tenor - "voices cannot undergo gender transition" - in a mixed choir, where she felt at home: "With singing you just wear clothes and can hide everything ... It's a safe group although it was pretty scary to tell them about it, since they were among the first few people."

Sandra's first sport activity as a woman involved joining a women's running group, which was a positive experience, similar to other work related 'experiments' relating to living as a woman.

I could join them without the hassle of dressing rooms, just in the car in my jogging suit; although I had to think about what is suitable to wear in sports as a woman ... The other runners were positive. They all called me a she and I didn't notice whether they knew or whether they had difficulties with it.

Nevertheless, she quit after several months, partially because she got a girlfriend. When this relationship ended, she decided to take up badminton again. Sandra joined another club, where some of the members had known her as a man. Since she had not undergone surgery at the time of interview, she didn't play competitively. This was because Sandra is apprehensive about possible resistance from other women athletes regarding issues related to fairness. She tends to be understanding when people who have known her as a man, sometimes still refer to her as 'he'. Probably due to the fact that Sandra is not very tall and of slender build, strangers never address her as a man. She notes that with respect to her relative 'feminine' posture, she profits from her Asian ethnic descent among the majority of people from Euro-Dutch descent. Sandra enjoys the fact that her brother

called her new car a real woman's car and experiences it as a compliment when men whistle at her on the street. At some moment in the interview, she stated that her penis doesn't really bother her. But she is also looking forward to the moment when she is legally a woman and able to fully participate in sport as such, including taking a shower and maybe also taking part in the women's competition in badminton.

Analysis: Sandra's sports biography is in a way a counter narrative, compared to several other trans women who not participated in hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) via sport while living as men. Some of them had hardly voluntarily participated in sports as boys/young men before transitioning, although they often did have educational and job trajectories fitting normative gender patterns. Dorien (39), for example said: "Before my transition, I never participated in sports. You need some kind of self-respect, which I absolutely didn't have." Many of the adolescents and adults we interviewed - both trans men and trans women - recalled changing rooms, swimming pools or the beach as places to avoid because they evoked particular unease about their 'wrong' naked bodies. When they were unable to avoid them, they coped by concealing their naked bodies or body contours by wearing long, oversized clothes. Others did not experience this need to hide their bodies since they were unable to register their embodied selves; they only seemed to have material (objectified) bodies that they were unable to identify with. Peter (34), for example, said: "I denied my body so unbelievably much that I had very little shame about my own body and things in general. If something isn't there, you can't be ashamed about it either."

For others, prior to transitioning, sport was an important way of shaping/controlling their (wrong) bodies and gender identities. Sport helped them in coping with their 'forbidden feelings'. This was the case for Patrick (42, see last synopsis) and for Evelien (38), who repeatedly mentioned that she trained 'like crazy' before coming out and underscored the importance of sports in her life. At the end of the interview, just before the interviewer was about to leave the place, Evelien made a powerful 'door-knob statement' about the importance of sport in her life: "Had it not been for sports, I wouldn't be here today." Both the practices of body-denial and -disciplining are related to objectified bodies and less to being embodied subjects (cf. Schrock *et al.* 2005).

Since transitioning is such a profound emotional and social process (Gagné *et al.*, 1997; Johnson 2007), similar to Sandra, most interviewees that were still active in competitive club sports (temporarily) withdrew from their familiar sports environments, even when they experienced these environments as 'safe'. Other interviewees also anticipated the potential for painful situations regarding dissonance between their gender identities and or presentations in the particular sporting environment and try to prevent them. Their cautious and attentive sensitivity regarding their

(trans)gender expressions in specific spaces and among people in known and unknown social environments may explain why most respondents did not experience discrimination. One of the interviewees was less 'careful' about navigating sport during her transition. This was likely a factor in her experience of discrimination in a (psychiatric) patient volleyball group and a local recreational badminton group she joined during her period of real-life testing and hormone treatment. She noted: "they kept saying 'he' and denied my womanhood. My first name was not said anymore either ... I noticed that I was a kind of freak" (Patricia, 46).

The constant process of negotiation and acting cautiously many trans people engage in during different phases of transition (FRA 2013; Lewis and Johnson 2011) was also evident in Patrick's story.

Patrick

Born as a girl in a strict religious family, Patrick (42) was not allowed to play outside on Sundays, watch sports on television, or join a football club, despite desperately wanting to do all these things. Instead, he cycled a lot. He knew "something was wrong, physically" since he was four years old and started using a boy's name in primary school. Patrick recalls disliking physical education and finding excuses to avoid participating, especially when gymnastics were on the programme.

During his studies in the country capital, he met his male partner. At that time, he also met a trans woman for the first time, for whom he then felt pity. Although he was troubled by his own body, he decided he was strong enough to deal with it. This led him to start bodybuilding to better shape the parts he is proud of. "My body consisted of a head, arms and legs. I didn't register what was in between." Fitness also fitted his obsession with numbers, "12 repetitions, 45 seconds break, another 12 repetitions, very tightly planned." Patrick strives to be as strong as the other men in the gym.

I think for me it was a combination of wanting to be just as strong as those other people and being so angry at your body if it doesn't function the way you like it to, that you train yourself to death. That you think 'just torture it, because that's the only thing you can do with it ... inflicting hurt on the self, like "stupid body!"

For Patrick, the process of registration for gender transition started when surgery was deemed necessary for a neglected uterus cyst. Having formerly lived in denial of and disassociated from his female body, he finally decided to confront himself:

In a hotel room I undressed and watched my own body in a mirror and thought, 'this isn't right'. It was the first time in my life that I

looked at my whole body. So I had to puke, I was literally sick, because you hate that body.

During the time he had to wait before he received a 'green light' to officially start the transition process with hormone treatment, sport remained important. "I was already able to pass and sport became even more a way to shape my body the way I wanted it." He was already living publicly as a man, except in the gym, where using the women's changing room and the mixed sauna was becoming more difficult. About that period, he noted: "women step in and say, 'oooooh', and go out because they think they are in the wrong room and then re-enter, blushing". He changed to the men's room when he started hormone treatment, after having informed the gym owner. Before he had surgery, he bound his breasts in the toilet or wore a vest and he took a shower at home or in an individual shower cabin. He is impressed by the effect of the hormone treatments: "I went to the dunes to walk, but I just started to run and that felt like crazy. I ran twenty kilometres and back again, that's a marathon! I had never run before in mountain shoes!"

After transitioning Patrick felt liberated and now lives his life in a more embodied way. He has become more of a body-subject – feeling 'at home' in and identifying with his (new) body – instead of controlling his body-object. And yet, Patrick is not completely satisfied with his male body, especially his small penis. He says, "All men see it and say, 'gee, that's a small one!'" He is also aware of the clear scars on his chest, and that people might ask uncomfortable questions about them. Nonetheless, it appears he is under much less pressure to identify with masculinity through sports, since he is a (gay) man. He continues to visit the same gym on a frequent basis, but he trains less obsessively and now feels comfortable to participate in physical activities that are considered more feminine, such as group classes for aerobics and yoga.

Analysis: Unlike many respondents, who start anew after transitioning, Patrick continued his job, stayed with his (male) partner and remained active at his fitness centre. But the training regimen he engaged in to build a masculine body and embody a masculine identity (cf. Connell 1995; Schleifer 2006), in combination with hormone treatments, was echoed by several other trans boys and men.

As particularly present in Patrick's narrative, many other interviewees also expressed feeling liberated upon completing their transition. They felt they no longer had to hide, deny, manipulate or control their 'wrong' objectified bodies. Several respondents very consciously planned to show their 'new' (post-surgery) naked bodies in places that they used to avoid, like swimming pools or saunas. Jeroen (47), for example, felt free to walk around on the beach bare-chested after his mastectomy. "And I did that, however cold it was. The only other person on the beach was wearing a

very thick winter coat, but I was walking around bare-chested ... Yes, I am proud of it, now I dare to show it to people!" Evelien (38) also 'celebrated' her final surgery by going to the swimming pool and changing in the women's changing room. Indeed, for many respondents their lived embodied experiences and sense of embodied subjectivity developed only after transitioning. Dorien, for example, was over 30 years of age when she started sport, with the welcome result that it "made me more physical on all kinds of different levels ... I have become much more self-confident, much more conscious of everything."

Patrick's narrative illustrates how the negotiation of the safety of particular (leisure) spaces for trans people continues after transitioning (Lewis and Johnson 2011). And sometimes, after initial positive experiences, their trusting expectations may give way to feelings of exclusion. Dorien, for example, quit competitive sports directly after having experienced a painful public outing of her transgender identity, during a women's cycling competition where she had 'passed' unproblematically for several years. "[The speaker] yelled my biological gender through the microphone ... If I were to consider competing again, you can be unmasked ... so you can find yourself under extremely great public pressure". This example illustrates the continuing vulnerability of transgender people to the 'risk' of being outed. This was particularly the case for trans women who participated in women's competitive sport, even those who had fully undergone medical transition (cf. Tagg 2012). Marijke (43) and Ellen (35) expressed mixed experiences relating to their acceptance as trans women in competitive sport (table tennis and field hockey, respectively). In 2008, Marijke played at the highest competitive level and noted:

I was one of the first openly transgender woman in competitive sports. Nowadays, things have changed. I think, there is more acceptance. But not always and everywhere. It seems you can be transgender in sport, except when you reach a high level.

This citation clearly notes a development towards a more inclusive environment for trans women on the one hand, whereas on the other hand this inclusion remains conditional. Especially at the higher competitive levels and when trans women win, the unfair advantage discourse tends to override the inclusion discourse.

Conclusion

The findings of our research partly affirm existing research that illustrates how transgender people, before, during and after transition, may feel excluded or forced to 'fit' into the binary gender structures and cultures of (competitive) sport spaces. But there were also counter narratives that

showed how trans men and women may use sport to cope with their feelings or (re)build embodied gender identity. The narratives especially illustrated the extraordinary particularity of the body-self biographies and (changed) meanings of sporting practices and spaces. Sport spaces are often especially challenging during the 'liminal' transitioning process, involving the literal transgression of binary gender structures such as changing rooms and sex segregated sporting competitions. However, our findings challenge existing ideas that sports and physical activities are only disciplining – and sometimes shameful or even dangerous – practices for transgender people. We found that many trans men and women, as well as younger trans boys and girls, have positive experiences in different transition phases. Indeed, for some trans people, physical activities and sport were and are foremost enjoyable, empowering activities within supportive social environments, (re)creating body awareness, gender identification and a sense of belonging.

Notes

- 1 Exact figures are unknown, but recent findings among the Dutch population from 15–70 years, show that about 0.6 per cent of men and 0.2 per cent of women may have such experiences (Kuyper 2012).
- 2 Due to the strict binary gender structure and the gender policies aimed at unmasking unfair 'masculine' advantage in women's sport, only transgender women with complete gender reassignment surgery (including genital correction) and legal recognition of their new gender identity in their country of citizenship are allowed to participate. Hormone therapy must have been long enough to minimize advantage from the 'masculinizing' hormones their former male body produced – guidelines hold that to be more than four years – and they must live for a minimum of two years in their newly assigned gender.
- 3 Although transgender people in the Netherlands can legally change gender and receive official documents with their 'new' gender identity since 1985, until 2014, such a change required a 'complete' transition including hormonal and surgical treatment and sterilization to prevent transgender people from producing or conceiving children after transition. Since 2014, transgender people can also officially change gender, without such full surgical transition.
- 4 For example, the victory of Dutch trans woman Nathalie van Gogh at the national track cycling championships in 2009 led to public discussion. According to an online poll in a national newspaper, 70 per cent considered her victory to be unfair (Algemeen Dagblad, 11 October 2009).
- 5 The game of Quidditch is inspired by the books of Harry Potter. Inclusivity and diversity are very important for the game, as is most explicit in the 'four maximum rule', or the 'the gender rule', which allows each team to have a maximum of four players, who identify as the same gender in active play on the field at the same time. The gender a player identifies with may or may not be the same as that person's sex. USQ acknowledges that not all players identify as either male or female and welcomes players of all genders and identities (USQ Rulebook 8; www.usquidditch.org/about/rules).

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