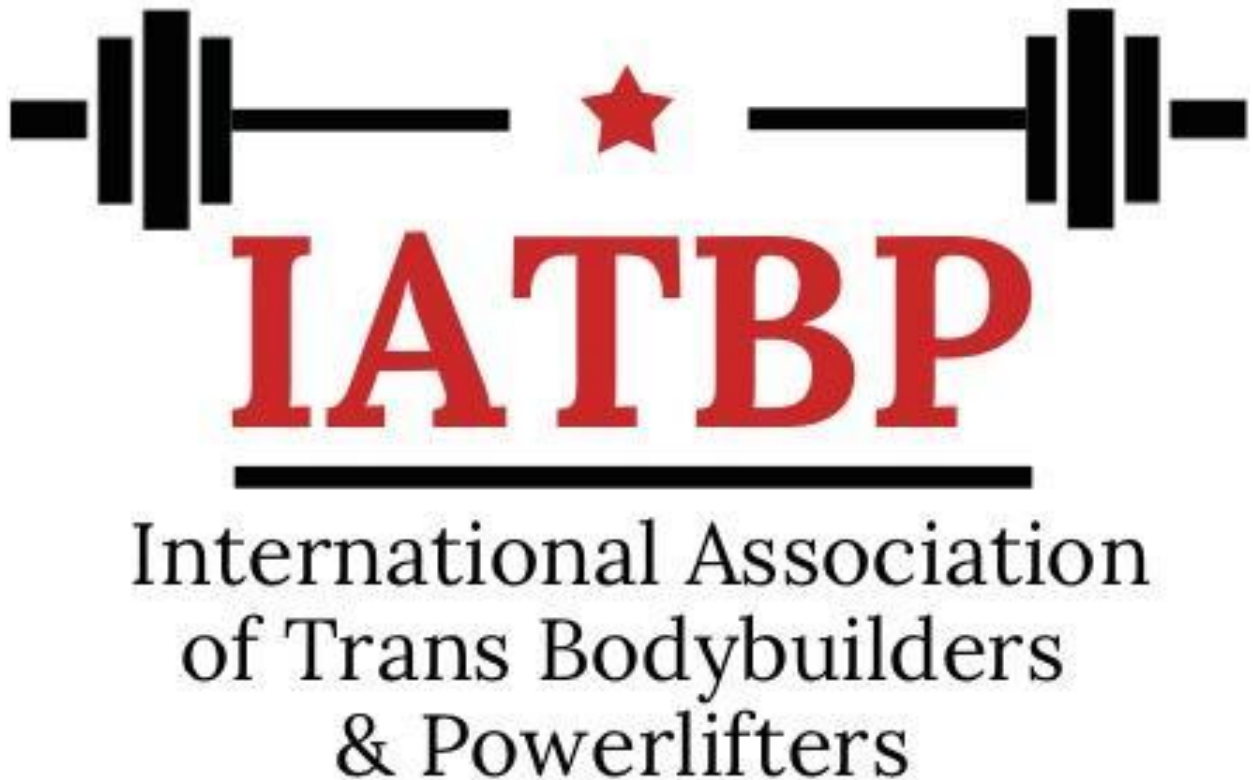


**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TRANS BODYBUILDERS & POWERLIFTERS
(IATBP)**

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GENDER DIVISIONS FAQ

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INTRODUCTION

We as an organization have noticed a severe lack of attention to the ways that transgender, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming athletes have been incorporated into the divisions of other athletic organizations, particularly strength and bodybuilding sports organizations. If at all, trans athletes are often incorporated as an afterthought, and the outcome is exclusion rather than true equity and inclusion. As an organization designed by and for fellow trans athletes, we have recently undergone a process of changing our own gender/competitive divisions in order to better serve our community, specifically our current and future competitors.

This has involved removing the divisions of Male, Female, and Mx that reinforce binary ideas of gender expression and identity, limit our ability to serve the entirety of our complex and diverse community, and treat non-binary/gender-nonconforming people as an afterthought rather than fully incorporated competitors. We are restructuring the divisions to make them not only more equitable, affirming, and inclusive, but also take into account the concerns of our community members. In September 2020, we started collecting feedback via multiple surveys about what current and future competitors (referred to hereafter as just “competitors”) wanted to see in bodybuilding and powerlifting divisions. Unsurprisingly, the responses were extremely varied and often contradictory. By far, competitors wanted to see:

- Divisions that are affirming of competitors varied/complex gender expression and identity
- HRT status taken into consideration
- A division that eliminates the need for identifying with any gender/HRT status

What follows is the way we are currently setting up our competitive gender divisions for the bodybuilding competition and powerlifting meet of October 2, 2021, in order to address **all** of the concerns arisen by our competitors.

COMPETITIVE GENDER DIVISIONS 2021

TERMINOLOGY:

AMAB - Assigned Male at Birth

AFAB - Assigned Female at Birth

HRT - Hormone Replacement Therapy

Bodybuilding Competition on October 2, 2021:

1. Femme I (AMAB folks 0-12 months HRT including AMAB folks choosing not to begin HRT)
2. Femme II (AMAB folks 12+ months on HRT)
3. Masc I (AFAB folks 0-12 months HRT including AFAB folks choosing not to begin HRT)
4. Masc II (AFAB folks 12+ months on HRT)
5. Gender-Nonconforming I (AMAB folks 12+ months on HRT, and AFAB folks 0-12 months HRT including AFAB folks choosing not to begin HRT)
6. Gender-Nonconforming II (AMAB folks 0-12 months HRT including AMAB folks choosing not to begin HRT, and AFAB folks 12+ months on HRT)
7. Open Division (for anyone regardless of gender or HRT status and does not want to be in a category based on HRT status but rather just weight class for bodybuilding)

Powerlifting Meet on October 2, 2021:

1. Femme I (AMAB folks 0-12 months HRT including AMAB folks choosing not to begin HRT)
2. Femme II (AMAB folks 12+ months on HRT)
3. Masc I (AFAB folks 0-12 months HRT including AFAB folks choosing not to begin HRT)
4. Masc II (AFAB folks 12+ months on HRT)
5. Gender-Nonconforming I (AMAB folks 12+ months on HRT, and AFAB folks 0-12 months HRT including AFAB folks choosing not to begin HRT)
6. Gender-Nonconforming II (AMAB folks 0-12 months HRT including AMAB folks choosing not to begin HRT, and AFAB folks 12+ months on HRT)
7. Open Division (for anyone regardless of gender or HRT status and does not want to be in a category based on HRT status but rather just Wilks for powerlifting)

We understand that these divisions are extremely untraditional and lead to numerous categories in which people can potentially compete. Our hope is that in expanding/varying the options for competitors (that are also more affirming), we will have more people actually register and come compete - people who before might not have found a place in our competitions.

GENDER EXPRESSION VS. IDENTITY

We attempt to center gender expression as opposed to gender identity (primarily in our bodybuilding competitions) in order to give people the freedom to compete based on how they present their physique on stage (bikini/swimsuit vs. posing trunks vs. mix of both) regardless of gender assigned at birth.

HRT STATUS

We also attempted to take into account the effects of HRT on training for strength/muscle and fat distribution, depending on the competitor's gender assigned at birth and the amount of time they have been on HRT. This was done upon the request of many survey participants. Our categories are based on the limited research that currently exists on transgender female aerobic athletes (runners), which is arguably the only current research on trans athletes we have to extrapolate for this context. We assume the individual is on HRT consistently, and within the average ranges for natural cis athletes (therefore not taking any other or performance enhancing drugs). We know this makes our system imperfect, since not all trans people are consistently on HRT over time, take the same levels, and some do take enhancements. However, since there was a significant request by trans athletes to take HRT into account, this is the best system we can currently create based on limited research that keeps the competition relatively fair and equitable, without creating too many divisions. Until more people begin competing with us, we have to put a cap on the total number of divisions, otherwise there will be many divisions of only 1 competitor - essentially making it a non-competitive competition.

OPEN DIVISION

We also heard significant requests from competitors who do not want to feel/be medicalized in order to compete, or even compete within a specific gender identity/expression category. Thus, we created an Open Division that allows people to compete regardless of gender identity/expression, gender assigned at birth, or HRT status. For the powerlifting meet, the winner of this division would be decided based on Wilks score.

TRANSITION STATUS & MINIMIZING MEDICALIZATION

No one is required to prove, explain, justify, or ever mention their gender assigned at birth, gender identity, HRT status or transition status in order to compete. The category descriptors are merely there to help anyone who is planning on competing, for them to know where they will be best-suited to register in order to feel most comfortable and affirmed, and also feel that they will be in a division that is most fair and competitive for them. These descriptors will be listed here, on our site, and in our handbooks, but not on any publicity handed out at competition (brochures, flyers, posters, etc.), nor announced publicly at competition (for example, on stage we might announce that the upcoming competitors are from the Masc II Division, Bodybuilding Class, but we **will not** announce that it is made up of AFAB folks 12+ months on HRT). This is intended to minimize public medicalization of our competitors in front of a wide audience during competition as much as possible. Only people who have looked at the [Competitor's Handbook](#), this document, or the Gender Divisions page on our site will be aware of these descriptors.

As a reminder, we do **NOT** have requirements for surgery/transition/gender presentation or expression in order to compete with us. This includes (but is not limited to) packing, tucking, covering/uncovering breasts, top surgery, or bottom surgery. For bodybuilding/bikini competitors, there are posing suit requirements depending on the division you are competing in, which are explained in our [Competitor's Handbook](#).

WHAT IF I FIT MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY?

Competitors are allowed to compete in multiple divisions in order to try out how they feel in each one if they wish to. Just keep in mind that as an IATBP member, you must pay the registration fee for each division you choose to compete in. Registration fees for divisions depend on which event you are registering for. They are decided upon by the hosts of the event, and can be found on the [IATBP website](#) by looking under the “Events” tab and selecting the specific competition you are interested in.

DIFFERENT BODYBUILDING CLASSES

This year (October 2 2021), due to high demand from our feminine competitors, we will be offering both a Femme Bodybuilding and Femme Bikini class. This will be prioritized above the previously listed divisions based on HRT status. If a significant number of Femme competitors register for either the Bodybuilding or Bikini Class, we will then subdivide that Class by HRT status as described in the Gender Divisions section. If you register to compete as a woman/femme competitor before September 2021, we will likely be reaching out to you to gather your input on this.

LAST-MINUTE DIVISION CHANGES

Based on how many people actually sign up, competitors may have to be moved around and grouped strictly by age/weight/gender expression. For example, if there is only one person in Masc I but several lightweight competitors in Masc II closer in weight to that one competitor, they would be grouped together regardless of HRT-status, unless they would prefer to stay in their own category and win by default, rather than compete against other competitors. This is a risk you run when competing in any show, particularly smaller ones.

FUTURE DIVISION CHANGES

This current division setup is not set in stone, and we will continue to change as more feedback is received and more research is done in general. The divisions are almost experimental in a sense, especially in a world that is not ready to take risks for trans equity and inclusion, and prefers to prioritize cisnormativity and cisgender people's comfort. No other sports organization is attempting to do something like this, and although we attempt to take everyone's feedback into account, it is impossible to make everyone 100% happy. So we are doing our best to integrate everyone's feedback as much as possible - prioritizing the feedback of those who are actually competing - and create something that can work best for everyone.

These divisions will change organically over time from competitor's feedback each year. We are excited to see how these divisions might change in the future as we get more feedback and experience in building something that is truly by and for trans lifters. In order to do this, we will be taking thorough feedback from competitors during and after the competition to see what goes well, and what changes should be made for the next year's competition in order to better serve competitors better in the future.

If you are planning on competing (or have already registered to compete) please feel free to give us your feedback on these divisions [through this link to our current survey](#).