



M/27/25
Monaco, 24 July 2025

To: MEMBER FEDERATIONS

Copy: Council Members
Executive Board Members
Commission Chairpersons
Area Associations
Dentsu Athletics

Re: New Eligibility Rule and Implementation Regulations for the Female Athlete Category including SRY testing and sample collection.

Dear all,

This is an important circular to explain new rules and regulations that will apply for you and your female athletes at the World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025.

On 23 July 2025 Council approved amendments to the Technical Rule 3, Eligibility Rule 3.5 and new Implementation Regulations to come into **effect on 01 September 2025**. This circular is to explain the background, introduction of the rules and regulations and the specific actions Member Federations and Athletes need to take now ahead of the World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025.

Background

The Male and Female Categories are central to the structure of Athletics. Preserving the integrity of competition in the Female Category is a fundamental principle of the sport of Athletics. Following decades of research and field observations, the 2019 regulatory revisions concluded that 46 XY athletes who are androgen-sensitive and produce male levels of testosterone have a significant performance advantage over 46 XX athletes. This advantage persists even with testosterone suppression and applies to all androgen-sensitive 46 XY athletes, including those athletes with Differences in Sex Development ('DSD').

When the Eligibility Rules and Regulations for the Female Category (Athletes with Differences of Sex Development) ('the DSD Regulations') and the Eligibility Regulations for Transgender Athletes ('the TG Regulations') were approved in March 2023 a Working Group on Gender Diverse Athletes was established. This group was tasked with monitoring developments in law, science, sport, and society, and advising on their implications for World Athletics' programming, eligibility rules, and educational initiatives.

The Working Group found since the 2023 implementation of the DSD and TG Regulations, that testosterone suppression in 46XY DSD and transgender individuals only partially reduces male athletic advantages. New evidence shows that performance gaps exist even before puberty and are influenced by female physiological traits, not just male puberty. No evidence suggests biological differences between transgender women and XY DSD athletes relevant to the Female Category. Human rights experts have also highlighted the need to protect female athletes' rights, advocating for exclusive female categories and non-invasive sex verification methods. Surveys indicate strong and growing opposition to XY athletes competing in the Female Category.

Why Are These Changes Being Made?

World Athletics is committed to giving all athletes equal opportunities to participate in and excel at the sport. Fair and meaningful competition conditions are essential to motivate athletes to make the significant commitment required to reach the highest levels of performance and to inspire future generations. As stated above Athletics competition is structured into male and female biological sex categories.



The Female Athlete Category exists to support three key objectives:

- **Formal sex equality** in competition programming, including equal quota spots, podium opportunities, prize money, and recognition.
- **Recognition of excellence** by celebrating the fastest, strongest, and most skilled women in each event, alongside their male counterparts.
- **Empowerment of women and girls** globally, using the visibility of champions and competition to challenge biological sex-based discrimination and promote sex equality.

To ensure the Female Category remains fair and meaningful, World Athletics requires that eligibility is based on biological sex. Athletes whose biological sex is male will be ineligible to compete in the Female Category unless they are completely insensitive to androgens.

Three Key Rule and Regulatory Updates

1. Affirmation of the Female Sex Category's Purpose

The Female Category is reaffirmed as a space for XX athletes, designed to ensure fairness, promote equality, and empower women in sport and society.

2. Eligibility Based on Biological Sex

Eligibility is now explicitly restricted to athletes whose biological sex is female. XY athletes are ineligible unless they have been declared eligible under the current DSD Regulations or are completely insensitive to androgens.

3. SRY Gene Testing Requirement

A new pre-clearance process will require all athletes competing in the Female Category at elite level to undergo a once in a lifetime test for the SRY gene—a reliable proxy for biological sex. This is to be conducted via cheek swab, with follow-up assessment if needed or requested by an athlete.

The Rules and Regulations will be effective from 01 September 2025, and cover eligibility at the World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025.

What is the SRY Test and what do Member Federations need to do.

This new requirement is that all athletes that want to compete in the female category in World Rankings Competition must have a negative SRY (Sex-determining Region Y) test result. This once in a lifetime test is to demonstrate the athletes' eligibility through the production of a negative test result. Specifically, the test is to identify whether the SRY gene is present or absent. The SRY gene test is a critical gene located on the Y chromosome that plays a key role in male development. This test checks for the presence or function of the SRY gene, which helps determine whether a person has typical male development or if there may be a Difference of Sex Development (DSD). The absence of the SRY gene will identify the athlete as biologically female.

We understand that the National Championship windows are coming up and some act as selection trials for the World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025, therefore you may wish to use this opportunity to conduct the unintrusive cheek swab to collect samples from your female athletes. During Covid-19, your Member Federation may have appointed a specific provider to carry out the Covid-19 tests and which could collect the sample and carry out the analysis for you.

World Athletics will be contributing to the tests. The amount will be USD100 per test for each athlete competing at the Tokyo 2025 World Championships. The total amount for each Member Federation will be calculated from the final entries list and will be paid to Member Federations at the end of the year.



Further Information

Attached is a copy of a letter for your medical manager / team doctor with detailed information on conducting the tests and some information to share with athletes. A set of questions and answers for Member Federations and Athletes will follow separately and the Rules and Regulations will be available on the website [here](#) (see Book C2.1, C3.3 and new C3.5A) from Monday 28 July.

If you have any questions or want to know more about the process, please e-mail the Medical Manager on a confidential basis: medical.confidential@worldathletics.org

In addition, World Athletics has set up a dedicated email for Member Federations to use if they require further information about the rules or any challenges they may face. A dedicated team of HQ personnel will be on hand to respond and support. The email is: FACT@worldathletics.org

A special Member Federation Information Session has been set up tomorrow, Friday 25 July, so our team can take Member Federations through the process and answer any questions you may have. We urge all Member Federations to attend one of the two sessions organised and would encourage you to also invite your medical manager or team doctor. If you have not received a link to the session please let us know.

Kind regards,

Jon Ridgeon
Chief Executive Officer