

USRowing Competition Category Policy

Updated December 2025, Effective January 1, 2026

Rationale

The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) has determined that under the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. § 220501 et seq., and further under Executive Order 14201 (which references definitions in Executive Order 14168), which it has determined is applicable, that all National Governing Bodies (“NGBs”) must adopt the Women’s competition category definition described below or be subject to consequences imposed by the USOPC including potential loss of status as an NGB.

The USOPC also requires that NGBs include the following language in their competition category policy: “USRowing will continue to collaborate with various stakeholders with oversight responsibilities, e.g., the USOPC and World Rowing, to ensure that women have a fair and safe competition environment consistent with the USOPC mandates, Executive Order 14201, and the Sports Act.”

Application

This Policy applies to all competitions sanctioned by USRowing and to all athletes and teams of athletes that USRowing designates to compete in World Rowing-sanctioned competition (“World Rowing Events”). It supersedes all previous policies or prior decisions by USRowing addressing whether an athlete can compete in a given competition category.

Policy and Competition Categories

USRowing has the following competition categories for USRowing-sanctioned events (“USRowing Events”):

- Women - Pursuant to the requirements in the Rationale, above, this category is limited to athletes who were assigned a sex at birth of female. This requirement is administratively applied under the “Administrative Application” section, below.
- Men – USRowing’s policy is that the Men’s competition category is for rowers of any sex and gender.
- Open Gender – USRowing’s policy is that the Open Gender competition category is for rowers of any sex and gender. Rowers who participate in this category may compete in either the Women’s or Men’s competition category if they qualify for such category.
- Mixed - A crew that contains 50% rowers who are qualified to compete in the Women’s competition category and 50% rowers of any sex.

Coxswains can participate in any competition category.

Administrative Application of the Competition Categories

For purposes of determining whether a person is eligible to participate in the Women's competition category under the Policy, the individual shall be eligible for the Women's competition category if that person's sex assigned at birth was female.

In registering for membership and/or competition in the Women's competition category, an athlete represents and warrants to USRowing that the athlete was assigned as female sex at birth. It shall be rebuttably presumed that an athlete's representation that they were assigned female sex at birth is correct. The presumption may be rebutted by USRowing, and only USRowing. The determination of whether the athlete was assigned as female sex at birth may be established through the person's original birth certificate or other reliable facts.

Collegiate Events

For the sake of clarity, in the event of a USRowing-sanctioned competition that is run by a national association for the exclusive participation of collegiate athletes, such an event will be included in the scope of this Policy.

World Rowing Events

World Rowing has its own statutes and regulations regarding competition categories at World Rowing Events. Athletes must comply with World Rowing's statutes and regulations to compete in World Rowing Events. This USRowing Policy shall also apply when USRowing designates an athlete or team of athletes to compete at World Rowing Events.

Member Profile

An athlete may select the gender and pronouns of their choosing in their membership profile, which need not align with the athlete's sex assigned at birth. These options do not define qualification to participate in a given competition category.

Athletes will also be asked to affirm whether their sex assigned at birth was female, and, if so, if they wish to compete in the Women's competition category. This will determine the competition category(ies) for which the athlete is qualified.

Confidentiality

All information provided to USRowing for the Administrative Application of this Policy will be dealt with in strict confidence and under applicable privacy laws. Such information will not be used for any purpose not contemplated in this Policy. It will not be disclosed to any third party unless that disclosure is necessary for the effective application and enforcement of this Policy or is required by law. USRowing shall not publicly comment on individuals or decisions under this Policy except, in its discretion, it may do so in response to public comments attributed to the individual or the individual's representatives.

For the sake of clarity, this confidentiality clause does not include athlete information that is normally provided to regatta directors, administrators, and announcers (including but not limited to an athlete's gender, pronouns, and competition category) or included in published results (including but not limited to competition category).

Anti-Doping Requirements Remain Applicable

Nothing in this Policy shall affect an individual's obligation to fully comply with the Anti-Doping Rules of the World Anti-Doping Agency ("WADA"), the United States Anti-Doping Agency ("USADA"), the International Testing Agency, the USOPC, World Rowing, or USRowing. If the use of a substance on WADA's Prohibited List is contemplated in connection with gender expression, then the individual must first obtain a Therapeutic Use Exemption ("TUE") from USADA before that substance is used.

Further information on the TUE process can be found [here](#).

Code of Conduct and SafeSport Policy

Abuse, harassment, and/or harmful acts towards the transgender and nonbinary community will not be tolerated. All USRowing members must follow the Code of Conduct and SafeSport Policy at all times and demonstrate the utmost respect and discretion toward all competitors. Please refer to these policies to report a violation.

Dispute Resolution

If a USRowing member has a reasonable basis to believe that another member of USRowing is not in compliance with this Policy, they may make a report to USRowing to members@usrowing.org but are not entitled to any further involvement in the process.

Other Eligibility Requirements Not Affected

The application of this Policy shall not affect eligibility requirements or rules otherwise set out in USRowing's Bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies.

Member Agreement, Consent, and Release

All USRowing members represent and agree that:

- a. All information submitted concerning their membership application or event registration is accurate and complete to the best of their knowledge, and no relevant information has been intentionally withheld.
- b. The individual will fully cooperate with and provide any additional information reasonably requested by USRowing in the administration of this Policy.
- c. Neither USRowing nor any USRowing employees, directors, officers, agents, representatives, volunteers, or other persons involved in the administration of this Policy shall be liable in any way in relation to acts done or omitted to be done in good faith in connection with the administration of this Policy.

Future Policy Changes

1. USRowing reserves the right to amend this Policy in its sole discretion at any time with or without notice.

2. At such time as any amendment to this Policy goes into effect, it shall immediately become the basis on which any athlete's current or future competition category will be assessed, regardless of the athlete's status prior to the new or amended Policy's effective date.