

HOW 'INCLUSION' IN SPORT IS HARMING WOMEN AND GIRLS

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INTRODUCTION

Women and girls are being adversely affected by policies which allow males who identify as women to compete in women's sport in the name of 'inclusion'.

It is happening in competitive and recreational sport, in changing rooms and toilets. The effects are felt from juniors to masters and at all levels from grassroots to national and international levels.

This report gives a voice to women and girls who have had their legitimate concerns disregarded, been intimidated and silenced. Their stories debunk the comforting myths which support this unfair policy.

While it is a global problem, this report focuses solely on the UK. Fair Play For Women have had first-hand **reports from 35 sports** and we are highlighting some of these personal testimonies, most published here for the first time. They reveal the prevalence of problems and the many ways in which women and girls are being adversely affected.

One male does not simply replace one female in women's sport. There is a multiplier effect. There are hundreds of males taking part in women's sport, affecting tens of thousands of women and girls.

This report shows how so-called 'trans inclusion' is directly leading to the exclusion of women and girls from sport. We document the detrimental effects under six key areas of harm:

1. Unfair competition and demoralisation;
 2. Losing out on records, rankings or on opportunities to participate;
 3. No consent or coerced into a mixed-sex environment;
 4. The chilling climate of intimidation, fear and silencing;
 5. Loss of privacy and dignity;
 6. Risking women's and girls' physical safety.
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“Inclusion has meant invasion, injustice and ultimately exclusion from our own category”

Sharron Davies, MBE, Olympic Silver Medallist

MYTH VS REALITY

Myth	Reality
Sport should be inclusive	Only women's sport is impacted by so-called inclusivity. Men's sport is unaffected.
Open categories are not inclusive enough	The demand to be included, not just in the sport, but specifically in the women's category is for validation, not inclusion.
This is 'same gender' sport	This is mixed-sex sport. Furthermore, most trans-identifying males do not have surgery.
This is fair - trans players do not always win	Male advantage is substantial and is retained even after testosterone suppression. Win or lose, everyone deserves fairness.
Only elite sport needs protecting	Most sport is not elite. Women and girls are demoralised at all levels, impacting general participation rates and the development pathway to elite levels.
This is safe	Due to musculature and bone density differences, women and girls are at greater risk of injury from males and are fearful of physical harm, forfeiting their chances.
This is kind	Validation protects the feelings of trans-identifying males. However, it is far from kind to women and girls.
This is protecting a vulnerable minority group	This is opening up the previously protected category of a vulnerable group. It harms other minorities, like women with cultural or religious sensitivities and women who have suffered sexual trauma.
Many women support this	Some women do but they cannot consent on behalf of all and for future women and girls.
Women do not have good reason to complain	Women's boundaries of privacy and dignity are being breached. Women and girls are more at risk of predation by males in general if single-sex areas become mixed-sex.
No one is complaining, so it is not a problem	Women are trying to raise concerns but are being disregarded, intimidated and threatened into silence. The problems are growing.
It is a tiny number, so there is little impact	Even one displaced woman is one too many. There is a multiplier effect. Each male can impact hundreds of women.
This is progressive	Reducing meaningful opportunities for women and girls to participate in sport and silencing any concerns is regressive
This is inclusive	When trans-identifying males are included in women's sport, this leads to women and girls feeling excluded and quietly self-excluding.

THE STATE OF PLAY

FEMALE-ONLY SPORT IS ESSENTIAL FOR FAIRNESS, SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION

The concept of fair play is the bedrock of all sports. No one wishes to compete in or to watch an inherently unfair sporting contest.

It is a long-established principle that fair and meaningful competition is achieved by grouping into different categories based on sex and age, and sometimes weight or disability. The biggest single cause of difference is sex. That is why most sports separate male and female participation and competition from the teenage years onwards.

It is not just competitive sport. It is well-known that female-only provision can increase female participation. There are cultural, religious and personal reasons for female-only sport. Women who have experienced male violence or sexual assault have good reason to prefer male-free spaces and sport. None of this is in dispute. That is why there are 'women-only' activities like cycling's Breeze Rides and canoeing's She Paddles.

BUT MOST SPORTS ARE NOT PROTECTING THEIR FEMALE CATEGORY

Women's teams and competitions now include males. They are no longer restricted to females. Many sports governing bodies have permitted individuals to compete in the opposite sex category based on their claimed identity as the other sex. Female participation in sport is a fraction of male participation already. This is making it worse.

THIS IS CONTRARY TO GOVERNMENT AND SPORTS COUNCIL GUIDANCE

On 30 September 2021, the UK Sports Councils Equality Group (SCEG) published revised transgender inclusion guidance for sport governing bodies. It was developed by independent consultants with expertise in sports medicine after a rigorous consultation and review process. The scientific evidence is crystal clear. They concluded that:

Allowing males to participate in the female sport category is not compatible with fairness for females.

Testosterone reduction does not undo the many performance advantages of male puberty and there is no known intervention which can do so.

This evidence-based, clear guidance from SCEG should have triggered immediate reinstatement of the protected female category in sport. Ministers have repeatedly said that sport governing bodies should prioritise fairness and safety. The guidance proposed alternative ways to ensure inclusion for all while restoring fairness for females. But fewer than ten sports in the UK have acted to protect fairness for women and girls. Some have been shamed into change through action by athletes, together with public outrage. Others are still reviewing, more than two years later. Around three-quarters of sports in the UK retain policies that include males in their female category, based either on self-declared 'gender identity' or on the discredited basis of testosterone suppression.

THERE ARE PLENTY OF EXCUSES

Most people in sport recognise that these policies are unfair. A common justification is that ‘there are not many trans people’ with the presumption that the impact is low. Some say that society is changing and this is a progressive step, or that trans-identifying people have difficult lives and deserve acceptance and validation as their desired sex. Others want to avoid being called ‘transphobic’ or ‘anti-trans’. Some sport governing bodies fear lawsuits if they exclude trans-identifying males from women’s sport. No one is asking why it is possible to identify into a different sex category, but not into a different age, weight or disability category in sport.

WOMEN’S SPORT HAS BEEN MADE ‘TRANS INCLUSIVE’ - BUT NOT MEN’S SPORT

Women are expected to accommodate these males, to accept a bit of unfairness for their sake. Some even say that women don’t care about winning, that it is the taking part that matters. This is being used to justify unfair policies in lower levels of a sport, even when fairness has been restored at higher levels.

The price is paid exclusively by women and girls. Women’s sport includes trans-identifying females (providing they have not taken testosterone) but women’s sport is also expected to accommodate trans-identifying males and people who identify as non-binary too. Men’s and women’s categories have become ‘men’ and ‘non-men’.

The obvious solution to promote trans inclusion without detriment to women’s sport is to protect the female sex category and change the men’s category to an open category. While this has been adopted in some sports, others have said men’s sport cannot be changed, even that men do not want trans-identifying players in their teams and changing rooms. So it is up to women to ‘be kind’ and include some males with special identities. Men’s sport is not asked to accept any level of unfair play and it remains unaffected.

NO ONE IS MEASURING THE IMPACT

Defenders of male inclusion in women’s sport often claim that the inherent unfairness can be tolerated because the impact is minimal due to the tiny number of trans-identifying males. The truth is that sports do not know how many trans-identifying players they have. Reporting the presence of a trans-identifying player is strongly discouraged, as pointing out their true sex is regarded as being offensive or unfair to them.

Many sports have statements like these in their transgender inclusion policies:

“All Participants should be referred to as the gender that they inform you they are”
(British Cycling)

“You must therefore accept them in the gender they present”
(Lawn Tennis Association)

“Club members should take care not to ‘out’ an individual by using a pronoun which differs from the one they use in public. Similarly, club members should avoid misgendering a trans individual.”
(Scottish Swimming)

The reality is that forcing women's sport to include trans-identifying males makes it mixed-sex. Women and girls do not know in advance that there will be a male present and may even be misinformed that the male person is female. These women and girls are going into mixed-sex environments without their consent.

WOMEN ARE AFRAID TO SPEAK UP AND ARE BEING SILENCED

It is claimed that some women do not mind and that no one is complaining. The reality is that many are trying but no one is listening to them. That's why this report is necessary.

The Sports Councils Equality Group project report (2021) describes the atmosphere of intimidation and fear around this issue. "The overwhelming majority of people who considered fairness and safety could not be achieved with transgender inclusion into female sport did not feel confident to voice these opinions. Other athletes said that they had been warned not to discuss this topic by their national governing body and had been threatened with sanctions such as non-selection if they disobeyed."

"One athlete said that the potential for a social media 'pile-on' would be too great, so it is easier to keep quiet and acquiesce. A significant number of interviewees said that they would only be involved if anonymity was assured...This was a frequently voiced frustration which regularly reduced the interviewee to tears."

BUT THE IMPACT IS ALREADY SUBSTANTIAL, AND IT IS INCREASING

Across the UK, we hear from women and girls who are demoralised, displaced, lied to, intimidated, silenced, shamed, have had their dignity and privacy breached, have been injured or are fearful of injury.

The inclusion of one male player into the female sex category does not simply displace one female. There is a multiplier effect as many females self-exclude. Women who do not want to play or compete in mixed-sex sports and those angered by the injustice will quietly drop out. Others are discouraged from joining in the first place, impacting the next generation of young girls and their participation in sport.

CALL FOR ACTION

- **Sport governing bodies:** Protect the female category at every level, restricting it to those born female.
- **Local authorities, gyms and others:** Ensure that female changing rooms, toilets and women-only activities exclude all male people, however they identify.
- **Schools and clubs:** Maintain single-sex provision rather than switching to mixed-sex, so that girls can train and compete without boys.
- **Local and national government and other funders:** Make protected female-only provision a condition of funding.

UNFAIR PLAY

ATHLETICS: *“I have not spoken to one person who thinks that it is fair”*

“I have had many discussions with my friends, both male and female, about the topic of trans athletes competing in female sports. I have not spoken to one person who thinks that it is fair for biological males to compete against females.”

ATHLETICS: *“Boys...started to beat me once they had gone through puberty”*

“I have always trained alongside boys/men and love training together. It has also enabled me to see first-hand that we do not have the same developmental trajectory on the Track. Boys several years younger than me that are reasonable athletes, or just good all-round sportsmen, started to beat me once they had gone through puberty. As a female getting strong enough to race other females that genetically are built stronger is a challenge - without competing with an unfair biological disadvantage.”

ATHLETICS: *“It will never be an equal match”*

“We do not just have the challenge of keeping healthy, fit and reaching qualification standards. As females, we also have to contend with our menstrual cycles, fertility, decisions around having a family and everything else that goes with being a female athlete. It will never be an equal match at the start line, if we are not racing other females.”

ATHLETICS: *“I started watching younger women lose their motivation”*

“There was one particular trans athlete in the over-45 age group that was impossible to beat. They were so fast that I eventually chose to move to a younger race category. Competing against women 10 years my junior felt a lot fairer than against a man. At the same time, I started watching younger women lose their motivation as they realised there was no possibility of winning races against people with so much more testosterone and muscle mass than them.”

ATHLETICS: *“It is hard enough...for potential GB selection without unfair competition”*

“As a young Track athlete, I waited anxiously for the announcement from World Athletics, on race classification. It is a hard enough task to make the top two in your discipline, for potential GB selection, without unfair competition. The current ruling has made it worth me working towards this and my dreams of being a pro athlete. A different outcome would potentially have made me have to make different life decisions.”

FOOTBALL: *“The imbalance in power felt so obvious to me, I couldn’t bear it. I’ve hung up my football boots for good”*

“It was only during our first competitive match that I realised how unfair it was. We beat the team we were playing 6-2, and the trans woman (male) scored all six goals. They were banging in goals from parts of the pitch I couldn’t have even attempted and the imbalance

in power became so obvious to me when I saw them plough through players with no awareness of their physical advantage. I felt ashamed in front of the other team because of the unfair advantage we had. It is telling that none of the rest of us managed a single goal. I actually walked off the pitch ten minutes into the second half because I couldn't bear it any longer. I later quit the team and I've now hung up my competitive football boots for good."

 **FOOTBALL: "I don't want to play a mixed-sex contact sport"**

"As an amateur, beginner female footballer, and a small woman, it's intimidating facing a male on the football pitch. I don't want to play a mixed-sex contact sport. I only feel comfortable and interested in playing sports with other females, and this option has been taken away from me as a result of trans ideology being adopted by society and by sporting governing bodies."

 **SWIMMING: "They did not have a fair shot"**

Prior to a recent policy change, a parent reported to Swim England that: "At the Swim England East Region Short Course Championships there appeared to be an age 14 biological male competing in the girls' events." This was very demoralising for the teenage girls racing in the same category and below. They felt they did not have a fair shot.

 **CYCLING, CYCLOCROSS: "All I want is a fair race...It was soul destroying"**

A woman who was a contender at national level said, "All I want is a fair race. This person hasn't been racing and suddenly they're there at national level. I love my racing, I love riding my bike, but I felt cheated. I got off my bike and I cried, because there was nothing I could do. I never want to feel like that again. It was soul destroying."

 **HOCKEY: "The sense of fairness was not there"**

"The person was 6ft 4 and had an Adam's apple. Every time I was going for the ball the transgender woman was far faster than I was and after a few minutes I just took myself off the pitch. I was devastated walking off and in tears. I came to play against a female opposition and there was a male on the pitch. I just felt the sense of fairness was not there."

 **GOLF: "No one was playing any competitions because they felt it was unfair... It's likely the ladies' section will be dissolved"**

Initially, the women's section at a golf club were welcoming to a trans-identifying male for recreational play but "no one was playing any competitions because they felt it was unfair." Several women left the club and the entire committee of the ladies' section "resigned due to threats from [the 6'2" trans-identifying male golfer]. It's likely the ladies' section will be dissolved."


 **AMERICAN FOOTBALL: “Girls trying to tackle were just being dragged along”**

A women’s team was facing opposition they did not know in a UK league. The women realised that the quarterback in the newly-promoted team was male. “That player was the team MVP (most valuable player), was posting record stats across in the league. Girls trying to tackle were just being dragged along.”

 **SEA SHORE ANGLING: “It’s unfair on everyone else”**

“A man can cast 150 yards, but I can only cast about 70 yards. Some of the girls can only cast 50 yards. It’s unfair on everyone else. And if you win in a situation like that, you can’t enjoy the victory, because it feels like you’ve cheated.”

“I’d still be fishing now if it wasn’t for [the trans-identified male angler].”

 **POOL: “I see younger women deflated, before they’ve even started... If it continues it will destroy women’s pool”**

“This was only my fourth final ever, but the trophy or money meant nothing to me without fairness. The devastation I have felt, I can’t even explain. I didn’t eat or sleep properly for two days. I was crying until 3am. I was devastated... No one cares how humiliating it is for us as women.”

“I see younger women deflated, before they’ve even started. You can see that they’re beaten before they’ve even started playing. Their confidence is knocked out of them and I think they will stop entering competitions... If it continues it will destroy women’s pool.”

 **CROQUET: “It hardly gives women the will or confidence to compete, does it?”**

“Even at the highest level of play I have yet to see a woman achieve a ‘bouncing bomb’ jump shot from the boundary as I regularly see men achieve even at club level. All bar one of the women (and men) that I have spoken to about this have disagreed that ‘male-bodied persons’ should be eligible to compete in women’s events. Reactions have varied from a sense of disbelief that it has happened to outrage. It hardly gives women the will or confidence to compete, does it?”

 **SNOOKER: “A disadvantage to me and all the other women”**

“Cue sports are my life and my job. What’s going on is a disadvantage to me and all the other women who play our sport. I practise eight hours a day but I’m starting to wonder if even that’s going to be enough.”

 **FENCING: “Is there a more effective way of destroying women’s sport?”**

“I don’t understand why the people making the rules are throwing women under the bus. I mean, is there a more effective way of destroying women’s sport than to allow any man to identify as a woman? There’s a depressing lack of leadership.”

**“I WAS
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LOSING PLACES

NETBALL: *At least one teenage girl is losing her spot in the squad*

In England one of the top junior girls is a trans-identifying boy. At least one teenage girl is losing her spot in the squad as a result. Mixed netball is a growing sport but these trans-identifying players are all playing in the women's game. Female netballers who do not want to play with males have to find another club or give up playing.

CYCLING, ROAD RACING: *"Other team members were pushed out"*

"I've seen problems in cycling where those in women's race teams have been pushed to welcome transwomen (males) into the team and ride alongside them. There are usually very strict rules about guest riders joining team rides but the rules were ignored for this particular rider and it meant other team members were pushed out."

CYCLING, DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN-BIKING: *The number of entries in the women's Masters category noticeably fell away*

A trans-identifying male cyclist was getting podium places in all the women's events in early 2022. British Cycling suspended its transgender policy in April 2022 so this rider should no longer have been eligible, but they continued to enter and compete in national events. On multiple occasions a woman was denied her place on the podium. Sometimes there were cash prizes. The number of entries in the women's Masters category noticeably fell away as the season wore on.

CYCLING, STRAVA APP : *"He has taken hundreds of QOMs from me"*

"A local male cyclist was riding on the Strava women's leaderboards and at local competitions. He has taken hundreds of QOMs [Queen of the Mountain – fastest time for a given section] from me... My time was beaten by a huge margin... Strava will allow me to report riders who use e-bikes but not men who ride as women."

FOOTBALL: *This was a place that a female should have had*

A thirty-something male was selected as goalkeeper for the British Universities team. Testosterone suppression does not shrink a goal-filling adult male frame. There was a separate men's team. This was a place that a female should have had.

WALKING FOOTBALL: *The Muslim woman did not return to the team*

When a trans-identifying male began playing in a women's walking football club, a Muslim player spoke up to say that playing in a mixed team was against her religion. She was told there was no problem because her (male) teammate was a woman. The club also has mixed teams, in which the trans-identifying male player also plays. The Muslim woman did not return to the team.

 **FOOTBALL: “A boy has taken her place”**

“A 13-year-old girl lost her place as a goalkeeper on a girls’ football team to a boy. That wee girl is now sitting at home wondering why adults are telling her to deny the reality of what she can see – a boy has taken her place in the team.”

 **INDOOR ROWING: “No one enters anymore...They know it’s pointless”**

A trans-identifying male regularly wins age-category gold medals in the British Rowing Indoor Championship and goes on to win gold or silver in the World Indoor Rowing Championships. These British records are probably out of reach of any female. A woman in another age category said, “No one enters against [the trans-identifying male rower] anymore. They know it’s pointless.”

 **FELL-RUNNING: Every woman fell-runner was moved one place down**

A trans-identifying male was the England women’s champion in 2010, 2011 and 2012, was the British women’s champion in 2012, even being considered for international selection in 2015. This denied a woman the opportunity to be a champion and every woman fell-runner was moved one place down the ranking list.

 **ROLLER DERBY : “One has to ask why they feel the need to take a woman’s space”**

“There is men’s roller derby. There is OTA (open to all) roller derby. There was women’s roller derby but as women, no one asked the women if they were ok playing with men. There are so many options for men to play roller derby, one has to ask why they feel the need to take a woman’s place.”

 **PARKRUN: “Can’t have a fair shot at a record or finish position...not inclusive, not kind”**

Around twenty age-grade records for female runners and several all-comers female course records are held by male runners registered as female. On around 150 separate occasions, in various locations, a male has finished as ‘first female’. “If the course record matters enough to put up on a website, it matters to the woman who has got it...They’re taking away women’s chances to be first in their age category and first in their sex class. That’s not inclusive, that’s not kind.”

A women’s course record was “smashed to smithereens...probably out of female hands forever.” “The previous record holder was a local legend.” “Parkrun are sending the message that... no matter how much they try they can’t have a fair shot at a record or finish position.”

 **TENNIS: The girls in every round all lost out to a male**

A junior girl at county standard lost a final to a player that she and her father both thought was male. They felt they could not say anything, but they felt it was unfair even though the LTA rules allow it. The girls in every round all lost out to a male.

LACROSSE: *“County girls teams have included teenage boys meaning that a girl has not been selected”*

“I have seen first-hand county girls teams that have included teenage boys meaning that a girl has not been selected.” A parent described a senior National Lacrosse weekend tournament in which a trans-identifying male was playing in a girls’ team for 16-18 year olds. “I was just surprised and concerned that a biological boy would be allowed to play in this age group given possible physical advantages.”

POOL: *“There’s only eight spots in that team... and if two are taken up with transgender players...”*

“There’s only eight spots in that team, for all the women who play pool in England. The trial starts with sixty-four women and only eight spots available, and if two are taken up with transgender players, that’s the future. The whole team could be transgender (male) players.”

FOOTBALL: *“The boy played the whole match when there was a number of girls standing on the sidelines who played very little or not at all”*

“My daughter was playing an under 18s girls football match at a London school. Very quickly it became apparent that there was a male student on the other team. His kicks were much stronger ... the way he moved was different. The worst part of it all is that the boy played the whole match when there was a number of girls standing on the sidelines who played very little or not at all.”

ATHLETICS: *“Even after the rule change, biological males are still entering as female”*

“It’s so frustrating that even after the rule change, biological males are still entering as female. It’s demoralising...I’m old enough to know my limits regarding training but I can see how other, younger women might think they need to train harder, which could lead to injury and illness. And I’m just up against one trans athlete whom I don’t race regularly. If it was a regular occurrence, I’m not sure I’d have the motivation to continue.”

ATHLETICS: *“I no longer participate in races where they ask for my ‘gender identity’”*

“I no longer participate in races where they ask for my ‘gender identity’. Anyone can identify as a woman and cheat and I don’t want to have any part of that. By ticking ‘gender identity’ I am condoning this misogynistic exercise.”

**“WHEN
YOU SIGN
UP FOR
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FOOTBALL
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FOR THIS”**



NO CONSENT

🥋 JUDO: *"I paid for my daughter to attend a ladies-only training day"*

"The Sensei at the judo club started the session by saying, "I've organised today so that us ladies can have a day where we all just practice with other ladies". The elephant in the room, of course, was the 6ft transgender female waiting to throw all the women around like rag dolls. How do I deal with this if it gets to competition stage? My eleven-year-old daughter works tirelessly to train both at home and at club. It seems unfair that she then has to get on a mat with, without meaning to be disrespectful, what is, essentially a man with a bra. My daughter feels very deflated and I don't know how to deal with it or what to say."

🏏 CRICKET: *"No prior warning so no chance of having a choice to play or not"*

The mother of a teenage girl watched her daughter's team face a female team that included a 6ft male in his twenties. "Fortunately the male player did not bowl pace and didn't get to bat so they carried on with the match. It was obvious that no one was comfortable with this but everyone was scared to speak up in case there were consequences. There was no prior warning that there would be a male in the opposing team so no chance of having a choice to play or not."

⚽ FOOTBALL: *"What do we do as parents?"*

"There is a boy playing for a team in my daughter's girls only league. It's not that obvious at the moment as the girls are just starting puberty but the child does have a completely different build to the girls. What do we do as parents when puberty kicks in for the boy, but he has been allowed to play in a girls' league from age 10?"

⚽ FOOTBALL: *She asked her mum why there was a boy trialling with them*

A mother took her daughter to trial at a football club academy u14's girls. She noticed one of the trialists in the girls u14's session was a boy. When her daughter had finished the session, she asked her mum why there was a boy trialling with them. Both mother and daughter were annoyed about this, but unsure what to do.

⚽ FOOTBALL: *"All of a sudden I heard this very deep, male voice"*

"The play started and all of a sudden I heard this very deep, male voice on the pitch. It completely threw me because I thought surely this can't be allowed. They had grown their hair out but had very masculine features and a male face." She decided against making a formal complaint after a friend warned her it would be "social suicide to make a fuss" and might put her at risk of being kicked off her university course.

⚽ FOOTBALL: *"No prior warning"*

"There was no prior warning that there would be a male on the team. The girls on our team were surprised to see a boy on the team as was the coach. Even though they didn't think that was right, no one had the courage to say anything."

🏃 FOOTBALL: *If the women did not allow this player into their sessions no pitch would be booked for them*

The football-related charity which booked and paid for the pitch said that if the women did not allow this player into their sessions no pitch would be booked for them. The women were told that any individual who did not sign an agreement accepting that player as a woman could not participate. A few women gave up and did not return.

🚲 CYCLING: *"It was only on the day that I realised a natal male was taking part"*

"Allowing men to compete in our events - to me, that has felt like tumbling back to the dark ages of misogyny. The first time it personally stung was in 2019 when I was taking part in a Masters race for women over 45... It was only on the day itself that I realised a natal male was taking part. Of course, they won the silver spot which meant I was placed bronze. It felt bitterly unfair, not least because not a single document mentioned the fact that the person who beat me was trans."

🚲 CYCLING, ROAD RACING: *"They had to be supportive and welcoming and there would be repercussions if they weren't"*

"I've seen problems in cycling where those in women's race teams have been pushed to welcome transwomen into the team...The girls on the team were told they had to be supportive and welcoming and there would be repercussions if they weren't. They felt uncomfortable but could not say anything as women's cycling is a precarious sport and riders can be quickly dropped from the team, lose any funded elements of their kit etc and not be put forward for races so they have to toe the line."

🚲 CYCLING, RECREATIONAL: *"I am not allowed to tell women the truth even if they ask"*

"I am concerned because women come to these rides expecting them to be male-free, and I've been told by British Cycling staff that we are not allowed to use the terms 'men' or 'male'. That means I am not allowed to tell women the truth even if they ask. I feel my own belief that people cannot change sex is being denied. I am not the only woman in this situation, but everyone is afraid of being dropped as a Breeze champion."

🚲 CYCLING, RECREATIONAL: *"Sexual abuse survivor has PTSD triggered by unexpectedly being in the presence of men"*

Nothing in the visible information on the Breeze website gives any indication that Breeze rides may be mixed-sex. A female sexual abuse survivor has PTSD triggered by unexpectedly being in the presence of men. This experience triggered her symptoms and brought on flashbacks of the abuse she had suffered. She can no longer participate freely in the Breeze programme.

🏐 NETBALL: *Emotional blackmail*

There are players in their fifties and sixties, late-transitioning males, at least one of whom has told netball officials that netball has been 'life-saving' for them and that the women in their club welcome them. This has made it very difficult for a woman to suggest these players should not be there, regardless of the impact on the women themselves. Even if unintentional, it has the effect of emotional blackmail.

SILENCING

⚽ FOOTBALL: *“Told not to say anything”*

“My daughter was told by the teacher there was a boy on the other team but not to say anything because of discrimination. He was much faster, and he scored two goals.”

⚽ FOOTBALL: *“The whole team has been told to not leave any comments on social media”*

“The whole team has been told to not leave any comments on social media regarding this issue (for or against). A coach has also left the team for his views against it.”

⚽ FOOTBALL: *“This definitely stunts my ability to speak up about how I feel”*

“Anyone who felt against the acceptance of transgender players in the female league has been made to feel like they are bullies and exclusive. I can’t speak for anyone else in my team but this definitely stunts my ability to speak up about how I feel.”

⚽ FOOTBALL: *“Women thinking of deregistering as players because of this... Psychological scars”*

“We had a Zoom call together and you could feel the emotion pouring out. We’ve been terrified of saying anything. We don’t want to be accused of being transphobic. We don’t want the names of our clubs dragged through the mud. It has been like walking on eggshells.”

“I’ve heard of women thinking of deregistering as players because of this. There are psychological scars. It’s not fair. We’re volunteer coaches – we don’t need this. We’re responsible for the welfare of our players. And I don’t think it’s being taken seriously enough.”

⚽ WALKING FOOTBALL: *“A lot of us now can’t speak up for fear of being called transphobic. It was our space and now we’ve lost it. So slowly the numbers have dwindled”*

A women’s walking football club for older or less mobile players were shocked when a trans-identifying male “was getting to the ball quicker and hitting it harder than any of us.” The women became terrified when they requested a meeting and were informed the agenda would include ‘transphobia’ and ‘hate crimes’. “They were worried if the police were going to come and are we going to get arrested?” The women were informed that they should join another club. “A lot of us now can’t speak up for fear of being called transphobic and we’re not...We just want a safe space for us to play where we’re all on an equal footing physically.”

🚲 CYCLING, STRAVA APP: *“Concerned about being labelled transphobic...losing my job. I’ve received insulting messages, regularly called a Nazi, all for the simple belief that women should be able to compete against other women”*

“Male riders are cycling in my area, registered as women. I’ve been blocked on Twitter by Strava. Another female rider had her Strava account suspended for seven days as a result of complaining about their policy. I’ve removed myself from the Strava app which I’d previously

enjoyed as a great way of keeping in touch with friends, sharing routes and showing support for other athletes. I've felt concerned about being labelled transphobic and whether my views would result in me losing my job. I've received insulting messages, regularly called a Nazi, all for the simple belief that women should be able to compete against other women."

 **CYCLING: "Cult of silence"**

"Arguably more difficult was the cult of silence around it. I know one woman who kept losing to the same trans rider and so eventually quit, and many others who have been seriously demoralised – and yet so few speak out for fear of being labelled a bigot. One trans cyclist was winning virtually every woman's race in the region – but when I went to the all-male board, they did nothing, in case it was transphobic to admit that men are faster and stronger than us."

 **CYCLING, RECREATIONAL: "Felt like I was shouting into the void and basically I didn't go again"**

"The physical differences were very much more apparent in terms of what they thought was a normal pace and distance. He was much stronger than the rest of us and went too fast. I actually wrote an email to Breeze saying I thought it should be made clearer that 'women only' meant women and trans women. But I got absolutely no reply. So, it just felt like I was shouting into the void and basically I didn't go again."

 **ROLLER DERBY: "Decline in women wanting to play...Not received a reply or any acknowledgement"**

"I have written to the sport's governing body (WFTDA) raising my concerns regarding the number of 'non-binary men' now playing a women's sport and the decline in women wanting to play at a competitive level or any desire to return to the sport due to the number of men now playing. I have not received a reply or any acknowledgement".

 **CROQUET: "Some players have been concerned for my welfare, feeling that I might attract abuse for speaking out"**

"Such is the toxicity of this debate that unfortunately players with a profile in croquet have been reluctant to speak out for fear of harming their prospects and/or reputation given the stand the World Croquet Federation (WCF) and Croquet Association(CA) seem to be taking. (Indeed some players have been concerned for my welfare, feeling that I might attract abuse for speaking out). While the WCF and CA may say that their policy is designed to be inclusive, I would argue that it is, in fact, exclusionary – particularly for the woman whose place in the women's team was taken by a male."

 **HOCKEY: Unable to complain**

A hockey player said she was unable to complain in case she was branded a 'transphobe' and in a worst-case scenario removed from her club.

 **SEA SHORE ANGLING: *“It feels as if we’ll never picked again”***

The women who pointed out to their national governing body that it was not fair to select a male in the national women’s team said, “It feels as if we’ll never picked again” because of the national governing body’s response. They believe they will be punished for speaking up for fair play.

 **ATHLETICS, RUNNING CLUB: *“Isolated & worried for my safety. I don’t want to go into my community in case there are bigger repercussions”***

A woman wore a T shirt saying ‘Save Women’s Sport’ at her local parkrun. She was shouted at in public by the club secretary. She was then suspended from the club and is being subjected to a disciplinary hearing even though there was no rule against wearing a T shirt with a slogan. This punishment has a silencing effect on any other woman who might express concern over women’s sport. “It has made me feel isolated and worried for my safety. I don’t want to go into my community in case there are bigger repercussions.”

 **ATHLETICS: *“I’ve lost all my old running club friends and had to leave the club”***

A woman who objected to male runners continuing to enter women’s races after this was prohibited by England Athletics in spring 2023 found she had no support from her club or from England Athletics. “I’ve lost all my old running club friends and had to leave the club.” Although it was the male runner who was breaking the rules, she was the one who was isolated.

 **ATHLETICS: *“They all kept their eyes trained on the ground”***

“They also easily out-ran us all, and afterwards I looked around at my fellow competitors in stunned amazement – but they all kept their eyes trained on the ground.”

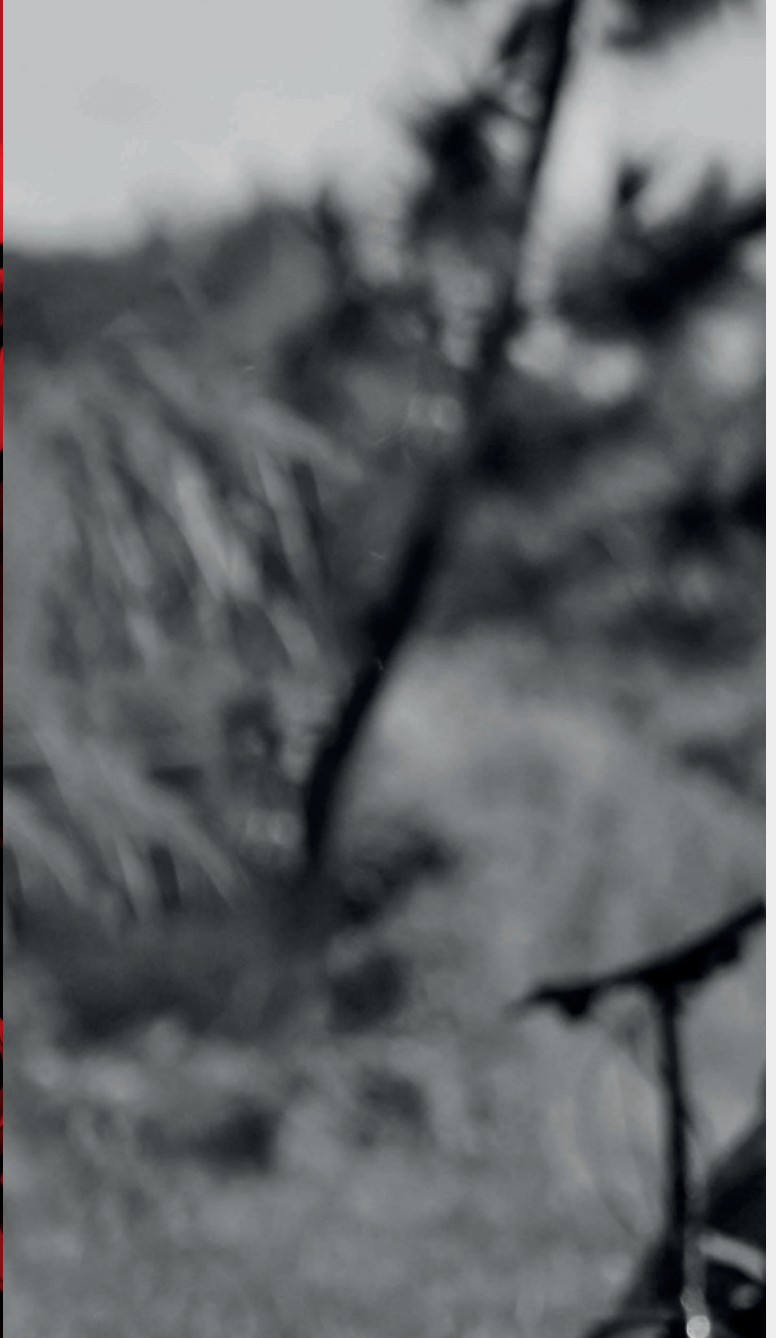
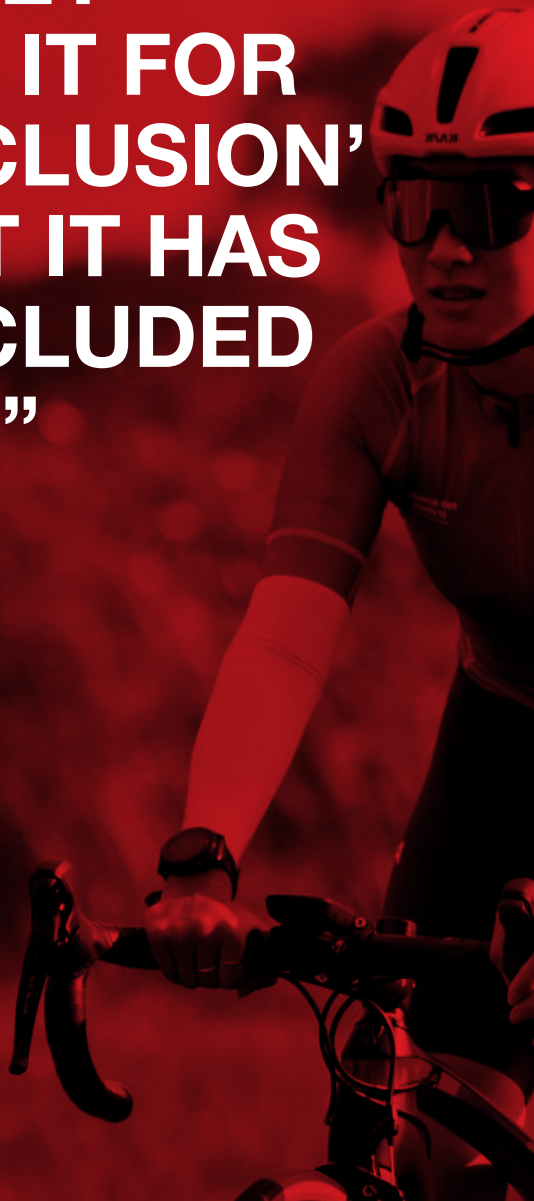
 **ATHLETICS: *“I become fearful to discuss the subject”***

“I have had many discussions with my friends, both male and female, about the topic of trans athletes competing in female sports. Yet, however, when this topic arises, I become fearful to discuss the subject; I worry that I shall be labelled transphobic. I am not transphobic, I just believe in common sense.”







 **ATHLETICS: *“Sent death threats and appalling abuse because I speak up in defence of fair and safe sport for females”***

“I have been personally negatively affected by being sent death threats and appalling abuse because I speak up in defence of fair and safe sport for females. I’ve lost work because I speak up. I’ve been scolded publicly by a young female runner for using the word ‘male’ about a male athlete.”

**“THEY
DID IT FOR
‘INCLUSION’
BUT IT HAS
EXCLUDED
ME.”**



PRIVACY

-  **RUGBY:** *“Nothing that they as women could do about a man being in their showers”*
- “The rugby club is only tiny so both teams share one open shower. They had to go in not knowing if he’d be in there or not. Knowing if he was there’d be nothing that they as women could do about a man being in their showers. Is this really the future?”
-  **NETBALL:** *“We’re in our 20s and 30s, he’s in his 50s”*
- “We’re in our 20s and 30s, he’s in his 50s. He plays in a skirt and shares our changing room. None of the girls like it, but we can’t say anything.”
-  **FOOTBALL:** *“I can’t bear to go to a club where there is the possibility I will be undressed and encounter a male in the changing room”*
- This woman was sexually assaulted by a man in a women’s changing room. “I still feel afraid in isolated women’s toilets and changing rooms to this day. I can’t bear to go to a club where there is the possibility I will be undressed and encounter a male in the changing room. I also fear being tackled by a male. This whole prospect makes me feel sick. I feel totally dismayed and angry. I’ve seen the benefits football has had on my girlfriend’s confidence, body image and connection with teammates. Yet, I am robbed of the opportunity to even try it...There are several ‘Women’s and Trans and Non-Binary’ amateur clubs. Zero for women-only.”
-  **FOOTBALL:** *“Young Muslim women in the league who may have had to overcome cultural barriers”*
- “There are also a number of young Muslim women in the league who may have had to overcome cultural barriers to join – and we shouldn’t forget about them...women deserve a level playing field.”
-  **CRICKET:** *“A 13-year-old girl... could well be sharing a confined space with a man”*
- “If I have a 13-year-old girl who needs to change because she has just started her period, she could well be sharing a confined space with a man who, under ECB policy, has decided they are now female. I have real concerns about that.”
-  **ROWING:** *Asked to share overnight accommodation with a male*
- A university rower found she had to share changing rooms with a male who identifies as a woman. One said when it happened (sharing a communal women’s changing room) she was uncomfortable. Another woman was asked to share overnight accommodation with the trans-identifying male when the club went away to a regatta. Other female club members expressed discomfort privately but found it difficult to object.

 **SWIMMING: “I feel so uncomfortable that I just don’t swim anymore”**

“I swam competitively as a schoolgirl and swam for my university team. I live in Scotland and my local pool has got rid of the women’s changing room so now there’s one gender neutral changing room. But the doors don’t go all the way to the top and bottom. I feel so uncomfortable that I just don’t swim anymore. They did it for ‘inclusion’ but it has excluded me.”

 **SWIMMING: A trans-identifying male volunteer in his 60s reportedly walked through the girls changing rooms several times**

At the 2023 British national age groups championships, a trans-identifying male volunteer in his 60s reportedly walked through the girls changing rooms several times a session for six full days, even though it was possible to access the pool without going through the changing rooms. Parents had asked the event organisers to stop it every day whilst twelve-year-olds were struggling to get into tight race swimsuits to compete.

 **ROWING: “A male transgender competitor spent a lot of time in the women’s changing rooms. Our girls had to use the toilet cubicles on the corridor to change”**

“Our rowing club regularly competes at the British Indoor Rowing Championships. One year, we took a large group of teenage girls. There was a male transgender competitor who spent a lot of time in the women’s changing rooms. Our girls had to use the toilet cubicles on the corridor to change in rather than the women’s changing rooms.”

 **CYCLING: “Why the hell should women have to put up with this?!”**

“While British Cycling have amended their rules for elite races, I do note that any man who declares himself to be a woman can still enter any female changing facilities. Why the hell should women have to put up with this?!”

 **CYCLING, RECREATIONAL: “Her right to feel safe is less important”**

“A woman who has suffered maybe domestic abuse decides to get life back on track, make some friends, do something new. She signs up to do a Breeze Ride, only to find that she’s the only biological female on a ride led by a man. How do you tell her that’s acceptable? That her right to feel safe is less important than the champion’s right to lead it? I’d like to know how that’s justified.” The woman who spoke up was removed from British Cycling’s Facebook group for Breeze champions.

 **CYCLING, RECREATIONAL: “Our Muslim ladies stopped attending the rides and many of the volunteers stopped...There are now no Breeze rides in my area”**

“In my area there was once a thriving Breeze network, a handful of volunteers would put on a variety of rides in a weekly basis. When we were made aware of the transgender rules, our Muslim ladies stopped attending the rides and many of the volunteers stopped giving their time. There are now no Breeze rides in my area, no volunteers and no provision for entry level cyclists.”

“I led a ride where a transgender woman came along. Other women dropped out.”

“I’ve been on Breeze Rides that are women-only and others with a transgender person joining it. It changes the atmosphere when there is a male.”

 **LACROSSE: *This male was using the women’s changing room***

The mother of two girls who play lacrosse reported seeing a male in a girls’ team. This male was using the women’s changing room.

 **HOCKEY: *“I do not want men in my changing room”***

“I would not join a club now unless I knew that its policies were strict in terms of both single sex and also mixed games and practices. And changing rooms. That is a huge thing for me. I do not want men in my changing room. We all know the assault stats for mixed changing rooms. I prefer mine women only at all times. I have plenty of legitimate reasons for this, but why must I lay them out? It’s enough that we have the numbers to demonstrate what is safe and what is not.”

 **TENNIS: *“Most have not had any surgery. That massively changes how comfortable you feel”***


“Initially women are supportive. Then they realise that a ‘transwoman’ is actually a man who thinks that he is a woman. And then they realise that most have not had any surgery. That massively changes how you comfortable you feel about sharing a changing room or showers.”

 **ROWING: *“Ogled, groped, threatened and harassed...so I would not do sport if I did not have access to a single-sex space”***

“Undressing in front of strangers is awkward and nakedness adds vulnerability. I can cope if it’s only females present. It’s hard to explain why I’m reacting viscerally to the idea of changing with men who identify as women. I’ve been ogled, groped, threatened and harassed over my life. It would be too intimidating to have unknown males present. So I would not do sport if I did not have access to a single-sex space.”

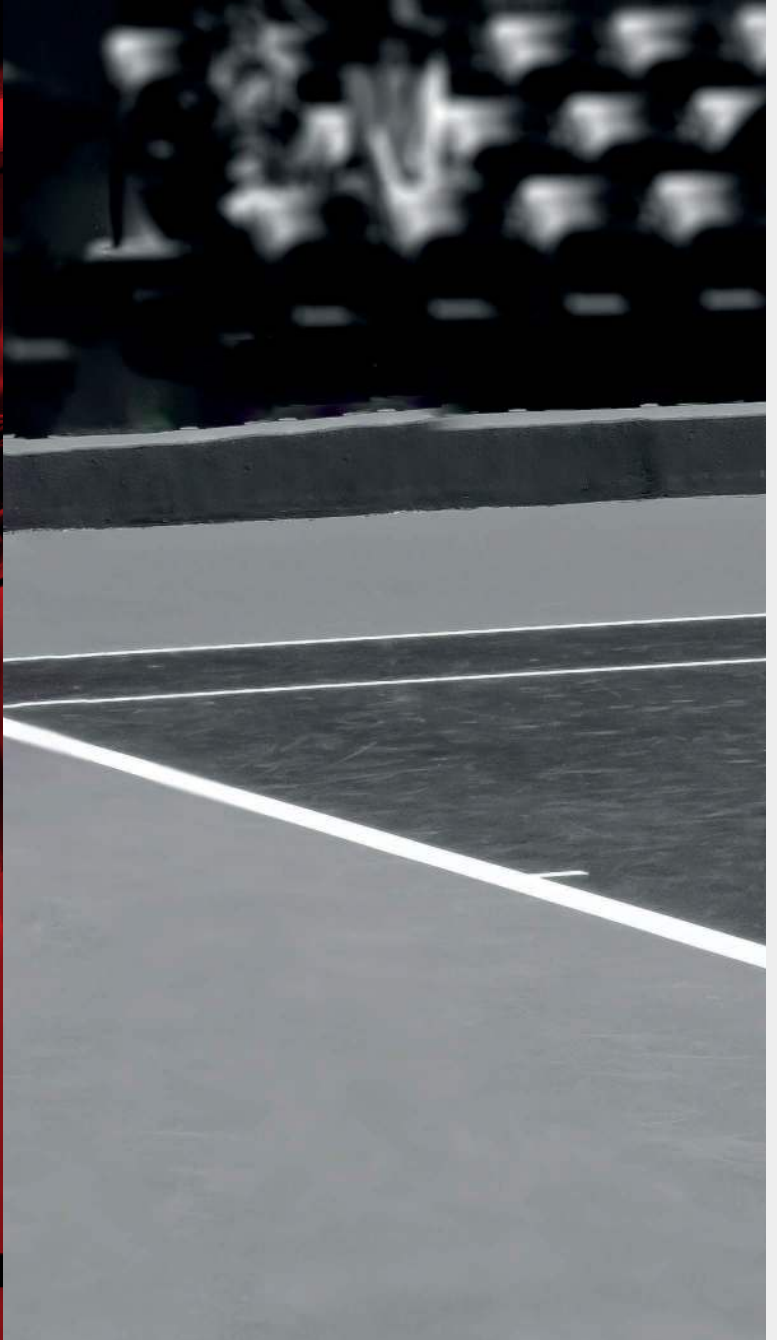
 **GYM MEMBER: *“They think their feelings matter more than women’s safety and privacy”***

“I don’t see why one individual’s feelings to say that they belong is more important than that of an entire changing room of women. It’s incredibly narcissistic that they think their feelings matter more than women’s safety and privacy.”

 **ATHLETICS: *“It concerns me when she is traveling with her sport that she is not truly safe”***

“As a father of a young athlete, I feel incredibly uncomfortable about the sharing of changing rooms. It concerns me when she is traveling with her sport that she is not truly safe.”

**“THE GIRLS
KNOW IT’S
NOT FAIR
BUT THEY
CAN’T SAY
ANYTHING”**



SAFETY

JUDO: *“6ft, 16st transwoman... who went on to immediately break the finger of one woman, dislocate the shoulder of another... My daughter gave up judo that day”*

“My daughter was a world medallist. 10 years of dedicated training. I paid a lot of money for her to go on a three-day women’s judo course. Day 1: Sensei explained the reason for the course was that there are few women in judo in our county and it’s important they get competition-ready by fighting other women, as men are much stronger and employ a different technique. Nobody mentioned the 6ft, 16st transwoman on the course, who went on to immediately break the finger of one woman, dislocate the shoulder of another and throw my daughter around the mat like a terrier with a rat in its mouth. My daughter gave up judo that day.”

FOOTBALL: *“She stood up with tears in her eyes”*

“Since I left, I’ve seen this (trans-identifying male) player tweeting about their most recent match, saying ‘couple highlights from today include: scoring a pretty decent goal, absolutely clattering their centre back so hard she stood up with tears in her eyes lmao’.

FOOTBALL: *“This is a safety issue especially with young girls”*

“This is a safety issue especially when there is a youth pathway within our team with young girls (17) coming up against biological males in the league. It takes a couple of seasons to get used to the strength difference in the senior women’s league. Now they are faced with trying to compete against biological males.”

FOOTBALL: *“In everyone’s efforts to make trans players feel safe and included, I feel unsafe and excluded”*

“When males are on the pitch I don’t play properly. I’m afraid to tackle, so I don’t block shots, resulting in more goals. I feel like I’m letting the team down. I’m afraid of being tackled so I don’t ask for the ball, or play my part, or do any dribbling. All of this hampers my progression and enjoyment. And if I do play properly, I risk injury. Not playing the game properly is almost not worth playing at all, so the other choice is self-exclusion.”

“I’ve since stopped attending matches on days when I know we’ll be playing against teams with trans players (males), of which there are a few. In everyone’s efforts to make trans players feel safe and included, I feel unsafe and excluded.”

FOOTBALL: *“When you’ve actually played against the player you realise how dangerous it is”*

A woman had a season-ending knee impact from the force of a ball kicked by a trans-identifying male player.

“The first couple of tackles I was just bouncing off this player. It’s not worth getting injured but then it’s no longer a competitive game. It makes a mockery of the women’s game.”

“You can choose to play mixed football. But when you sign up for women’s football you don’t sign up for this.”

“One of their players [in the male player’s team] said she refuses to be on the other side in training.”

“If it carries on like this I might stop playing. When you’ve actually played against the player you realise how dangerous it is.”

“I have 16 and 17 year olds in my squad. [Now I’ve seen what happened to that female player] I won’t let them line up against that team. But if I won’t put them in the line-up I can’t do it for the others either.”

 **FOOTBALL: “My daughter no longer plays”**

“My (talented) 15 year old daughter no longer plays. As striker, it’s too risky taking on an unknown team, who may have a male goalkeeper. She (used to) go for it one on one with them quite often. It’s too big a risk for her.”

 **FOOTBALL: “It makes a mockery of the women’s game”**

“I asked my team and they said, what difference will one player make? So they played. But X ran all over the field, played in every position.”

“Five minutes into our game, it was obvious X was biologically male. The league is competitive and physical, but a lot of my harder-tackling players were bouncing off this person. They took matters into their own hands and backed out for their own safety. These are strong players in their mid-30s. We were gobsmacked. Even the referee couldn’t believe it.”

“Women have lost their category and it has become an open category, while men’s sport is unaffected.”

 **ICE-HOCKEY: Did not feel safe trying to tackle this player**

“We did not know there were transgender players on the opposing team until the warmup. A teammate said, They’ve got a man playing!. This was obvious because of the male voice on the ice.” She did not feel safe trying to tackle this player, who was clearly faster and could hit much harder.

 **CRICKET: “Hits the ball harder than any other player I have seen”**

“This player hits the ball harder than any other I have seen in the league.” “Parents will not allow their daughters to play in the matches this player is involved in for the forthcoming season, primarily due to how hard this player hits the ball and we are concerned this will not only prevent clubs putting teams out but also discourage new players from joining hard ball teams.”

 **CRICKET: “Unacceptable, uncomfortable and dangerous”**

“This is a development league for women and girls’ cricket. It is therefore of concern that they have been involved in a match against a team with a transitioned man. As father to these girls (aged 14 & 16) I find that unacceptable, uncomfortable, and dangerous, both morally and physically.”

CRICKET: “One incident is enough to turn them off the game”

A parent of a 12-year-old girl described fears that she and her teammates would “give up on cricket, because they become so frightened about having to face bowling and fielding of that strength and force. Many girls at this age are only just starting hard-ball cricket, and one incident is enough to turn them off the game.”

RUGBY: “Put at risk by playing against someone who has gone through male puberty”

“My daughter was always going to play rugby ‘like Mummy’, but this is now on hold until we get clarity on the RFU’s position on mixed sex rugby. We can’t have her falling in love with the game and then being put at risk by playing against someone who has gone through male puberty.”

BASKETBALL: “Women were getting hurt. In the end the whole thing fell apart”

A group of women played recreational basketball once a week. “It was supposed to be friendly, but this player got so physical, it got rough. Women were getting hurt. In the end the whole thing fell apart.” They stopped playing.

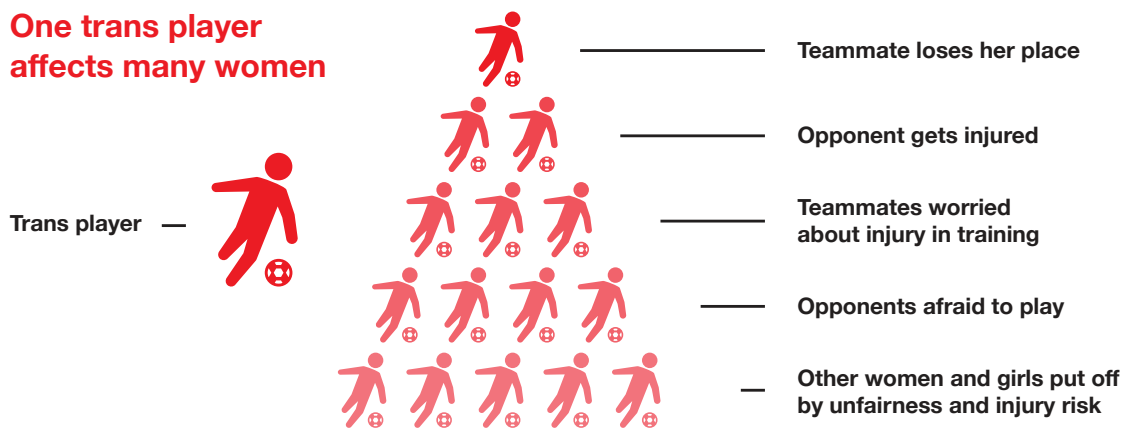
ROLLER DERBY: “This is about women’s safety when playing a competitive and physical sport”

“I have played roller derby for over 14 years and currently I am not playing any competitive games due to an influx of men who say that they are ‘non-binary’. The sport was built for women, by women. Now there are so many women, like me, who have played the game for a long time, who are no longer playing because we don’t want the physical contact from men. This is about women’s safety when playing a competitive and physical sport.”

RUGBY: “She folded a girl like a deckchair”

The BBC reported on a transgender player called Kelly Morgan in Wales - At nearly 6ft Kelly stands out among her team-mates, who have nicked-named her ‘Beast’. The club captain said, “She folded a girl like a deckchair during a game.” The club coach said, “She’s going to be a good, good player for the next few years, as long as we can stop her injuring players in training.” “I do feel guilty, but what can you do?” Kelly says.

One trans player affects many women





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fair Play For Women would like to thank all the women and girls, athletes, coaches, officials and parents who contributed their testimonies. Thanks to Women In Sport for collecting some additional football stories.

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