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Education

MSHSAA policy on transgender athletes null after new law effect



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By **Hannah Falcon**

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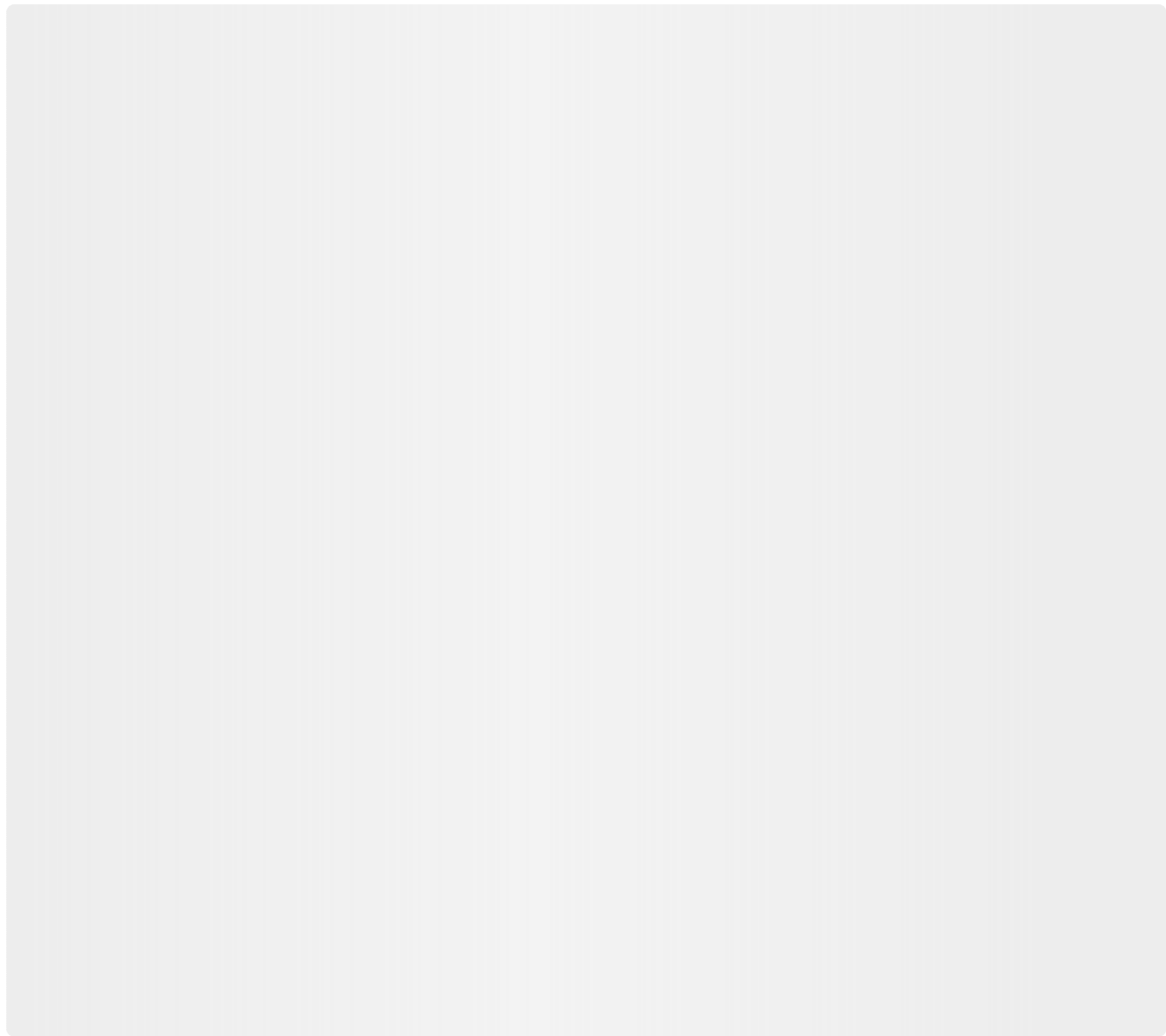
COLUMBIA, Mo. (KMIZ)

After a law called the "Save Women's Sports Act" by supporters went into effect Aug. 28, a Missouri State High School Athletic Association policy regarding transgender student-athletes is no longer relevant.

The "Save Women's Sports Act" requires any student-athlete to play on a team that matches the gender they were assigned at birth. According to MSHSAA, 10 students from 10 different schools are affected by the law.

Those 10 students had their eligibility as transgender students rescinded, MSHSAA spokesman Jason West said, and the schools were notified that the students now had to follow the new law. MSHSAA cannot disclose where those students go to school because of privacy policies.

"One expectation of membership is that member schools will follow state statutes," West said. "If there is ever a state law that contradicts a MSHSAA By-Law or policy, then that by-law or policy is changed to reflect the change in the state law. There was a policy for transgender participation in place, with this new law ... that policy is negated."



The MSHSAA handbook states its policy on transgender participation was nullified by state law and will not appear in next year's handbook.

BOARD POLICY ON TRANSGENDER PARTICIPATION

The following Board Policy was nullified as per State Statute RSMo 163.048 which was truly agreed to and finally passed by the Missouri Legislature on May 10, 2023 to become effective August 28, 2023. Unless other action is taken by the legislature in the meantime, the provisions of this state law will expire on August 28, 2027. This policy will not appear in the 2024-25 MSHSAA Handbook.

This policy is adopted to insure competitive fairness, equity and physical safety of all interscholastic sports and student-athletes. A transgender student is defined as a student whose consistent gender identity or expression does not match the sex assigned to him or her at birth as reflected on the student's birth certificate and school records.

Application Required: A request is required before approval of participation that would otherwise be in opposition to By-Law 3.20 can be granted by the Executive Director. A student seeking participation under the above policy due to gender transition shall gather and submit a MSHSAA Application for participation, along with all documentation required, to the administration of his/her member school for submittal to MSHSAA. The Executive Director shall issue an opinion on the school's request regarding participation under this policy after receiving all documentation required. Any appeal by the member school of the Executive Director's opinion shall be as provided in By-Law 5.4.8-10.

A transgender student must meet the following in order to participate in sex-separated interscholastic sports so long as the athlete's use of medical/hormone therapy is consistent with current medical standards:

No Medical/Hormone Treatment: Any transgender student-athlete who is not taking medical/hormone treatment related to gender transition may commence and continue interscholastic participation in sex-separated sports in accordance with his or her assigned birth gender.

- A trans male (female to male) student-athlete who is not taking medical/hormone treatment related to gender transition may participate in coed sports and may apply to participate in boys sports. Once the student participates in a boys' sport, he shall participate consistently with that gender for the remainder of his interscholastic eligibility.
- A trans female (male to female) student-athlete who is not taking medical/hormone treatments related to gender transition **may not** compete on a girls' team, but may participate in coed and boys sports. (See also By-Law 3.20.)

Receiving Medical/Hormone Treatment:

- A trans male (female to male) student-athlete who has commenced medical/hormone treatment with prescribed drugs for diagnosed gender dysphoria and/or transsexualism, may compete on a boys' team, but is **no longer eligible** to compete on a girls' team without changing that team status to a coed team. (See also By-Law 3.20.d.)
- A trans female (male to female) student-athlete being treated with hormone suppression medication for diagnosed gender dysphoria and/or transsexualism may continue to compete on a boys' team but may not compete on a girls' team, without changing it to a coed team, until one calendar year of documented medical/hormone treatment and/or suppression is completed. To maintain eligibility, a trans female student shall thereafter provide continuing medical documentation that the appropriate hormone levels are being maintained.

Once a student has been granted eligibility consistent with his/her gender identity and expression under the above policy and has participated interscholastically, the eligibility granted shall be binding on the student for the remaining duration of the student's interscholastic eligibility.

This policy was taken in part from the approved NCAA Transgender Participation Policy, as published in *Champions of Respect*, which was commissioned in 2012. (2012; Revised 2023)

BOARD POLICY ON UNCLAIMED CHECKS

The MSHSAA shall, for any issued check of \$50.00 or greater which remains uncashed, exercise due diligence in locating the payee, canceling the original check and issuing a replacement payment to the payee. For payees which cannot be reasonably located and for all other stale checks or other liabilities, the MSHSAA shall report such liabilities to the Office of the State Treasurer as required by the Missouri Uniform Disposition of Unclaimed Property Act, Chapter 447, RSMo.

BOARD POLICY ON UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

MSHSAA By-Law 5.5 provides that each school is responsible for the conduct of its teams, coaches, students, and fans at games both at home and away. (A fan is considered a non-school student or follower of the school team.) These by-laws further make it clear that the Board of Directors has the responsibility to take action when the school does not, or cannot, adequately control the conduct of its players, coaches, students and fans. The game rules for each sport contain the standards of sportsmanship to be enforced by athletic game officials.

Unsportsmanlike conduct or misconduct of an athlete, coach, student, or fan, whether before, during, or after a contest is of concern to the Board of Directors if the incident can be directly related to an athletic event under the jurisdiction of the MSHSAA.

Robert Fischer with PROMO, an organization that lobbies on behalf of LGBTQ+ people, said some Missouri families are protesting this new law by creating recreation league teams for all genders.

"There is a conversation about how this is supposed to protect women's sports, that it's supposed to protect opportunity, when in actuality there are serious concerns in women's sports already that have not been addressed," Fischer said.

Tipton R-VI School District does not have any transgender student athletes, however Superintendent Terry Robinson, PhD, said he supports this law.

"It has taken many years to build these opportunities for women and to see them negatively impacted by making their playing field unbalanced is not in the best interest of public schools," Robinson said.

This law was passed at the same time as another law banning gender transition care for minors in Missouri. Because of that law, Washington University Hospital in St. Louis and the University of Missouri Health System in Columbia both ended their transgender care options for minors. WashU announced the end of its treatments Monday, saying the new law created too much liability for the hospital.

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Hannah Falcon



Hannah joined the ABC 17 News Team from Houston, Texas, in June 2021. She graduated from Texas A&M University. She was editor of her school newspaper and interned with KPRC in Houston. Hannah also spent a semester in Washington, D.C., and loves political reporting.



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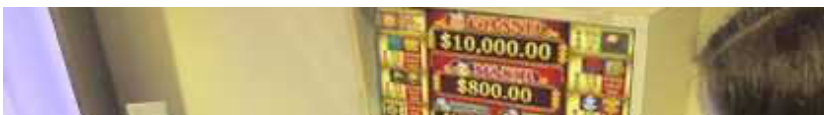
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