# **Justice for Trans Athletes**

### **Emerald Studies in Sport and Gender**

#### Series Editor: Helen Jefferson Lenskyj, University of Toronto, Canada

Editorial Board: Doug Booth, University of Otago, New Zealand; Jayne Caudwell, Bournemouth University, UK; Delia Douglas, University of Manitoba, Canada; Janice Forsyth, University of Western Ontario, Canada; Tara Magdalinski, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia; Jaime Schultz, Pennsylvania State University, USA; Heather Sykes, University of Toronto, Canada; Beccy Watson, Leeds Beckett University, UK.

*Emerald Studies in Sport and Gender* promotes research on two important and related areas within sport studies: women and gender. The concept of gender is included in the series title in order to problematize traditional binary thinking that classifies individuals as male or female, rather than looking at the full gender spectrum. In sport contexts, this is a particularly relevant and controversial issue, for example, in the case of transgendered athletes and female athletes with hyperandrogenism. The concept of sport is interpreted broadly to include activities ranging from physical recreation to high-performance sport.

The interdisciplinary nature of the series will encompass social and cultural history and philosophy as well as sociological analyses of contemporary issues. Since any analysis of sport and gender has political implications and advocacy applications, learning from history is essential.

Contributors to the series are encouraged to develop an intersectional analysis where appropriate, by examining how multiple identities, including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, social class and ability, intersect to shape the sport experiences of women and men who are Indigenous, racialized, members of ethnic minorities, LGBTQ2S+, working class, or disabled.

We welcome submissions from both early career and more established researchers.

### **Previous Volumes**

Gender, Athletes' Rights, and the Court of Arbitration for Sport – Helen Lenskyj Running, Identity and Meaning: The Pursuit of Distinction Through Sport – Neil Baxter

Sports Charity and Gendered Labour - Catherine Palmer

The Professionalisation of Women's Sport: Issues and Debates – Edited by Ali Bowes and Alex Culvin

Sport, Gender and Mega-Events - Edited by Katherine Dashper

Sport, Gender and Development: Intersections, Innovations and Future Trajectories – Lyndsay M.C. Hayhurst

Gender Equity in UK Sport Leadership and Governance – Edited by Philippa Velija and Lucy Piggott

### **Forthcoming Volumes**

Women's Football in a Global, Professional Era – Edited by Alex Culvin and Ali Bowes

*Trans Athletes' Resistance: The Struggle for Justice in Sport* – Edited by Ali Greey and Helen Jefferson Lenskyj

'The sudden controversies over trans women's place in elite sports call for investigation. This book traces how moral panics have been fabricated to justify prejudice and exclusion. It carefully unpacks the policies of different sports bodies and shows how a spurious rhetoric of "science" is invoked to maintain social barriers. Equally important, the authors offer a positive approach based on principles of justice. In brief: an important resource'.

-Raewyn Connell, author of Gender: In World Perspective

# Justice for Trans Athletes: Challenges and Struggles

## EDITED BY

## ALI DURHAM GREEY

University of Toronto, Canada

And

### **HELEN JEFFERSON LENSKYJ** University of Toronto, Canada



United Kingdom - North America - Japan - India - Malaysia - China

Emerald Publishing Limited Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2023

Editorial matter and selection © 2023 Ali Durham Greey and Helen Jefferson Lenskyj. Individual chapters © 2023 The authors. Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.

#### Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

#### British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80262-986-6 (Print) ISBN: 978-1-80262-985-9 (Online) ISBN: 978-1-80262-987-3 (Epub)



ISOQAR certified Management System, awarded to Emerald for adherence to Environmental standard ISO 14001:2004.

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Certificate Number 1985 ISO 14001 Ali and Helen would like to dedicate this book to trans athletes of all ages and levels.

This page intentionally left blank

## **Table of Contents**

About the Contributors	xi
List of Contributors	xvii
Acknowledgements	xix
Part 1 Trans Inclusion: Contested Terrain	
Chapter 1 Introduction: The Binary World of Sport	3
Helen Jefferson Lenskyj and Ali Durham Greey	
Chapter 2 The Future of Women's Sport Includes Transgender	
Women and Girls	17
Jaime Schultz, Anna Baeth, Anne Lieberman, Lindsay Parks Pieper and Elizabeth A. Sharrow	

Chapter 3 Making Sense of Debate Over Transgender Athletes in	
Olympic Sport	31
Roger Pielke Jr.	

# Chapter 4'Female' Sport and Testosterone Panic45Travers

Part 2 Trans Rights: Global, National, Local

Chapter 5	Competitive Fairness or Inclusion: Balancing Governance	
and Human	Rights Law	63
Lauren Mc	Coy Coffey	

### *x* Table of Contents

Chapter 6 Examining World Rugby's Transgender Ban and the Perspectives of Cisgender Women Who Play Rugby in England, Canada and Australia	75
Richard Pringle and Erik Denison	10
Chapter 7 Something Old, Something New: Biofeminist Resistance to Trans Inclusion in Sport Madeleine Pape	95
Chapter 8 'This Bill Is About Fairness': An Argument Against the Prioritization of Competitive Fairness at the Expense of Justice in US School Sport Colleen English and Lindsay Parks Pieper	109
Part 3 Media Complicity in Trans Exclusion	
Chapter 9 Mediated Moral Panics: Trans Athlete Spectres, the Haunting of Cisgender Girls and Politicians as Moral Entrepreneurs in 2021 Anna Baeth and Anna Goorevich	137
<b>Chapter 10</b> 'We're Missing That Humanity': A Feminist Media Analysis of Laurel Hubbard and the Tokyo Olympic Games Monica Nelson, Shannon Scovel and Holly Thorpe	151
Chapter 11 Conclusion: Challenges, Struggles and the Way Forward Ali Durham Greey and Helen Jefferson Lenskyj	165

175

## About the Contributors

**Dr Anna Baeth (she/her)** is the Director of Research for Athlete Ally. She is a critical feminist scholar and a cultural studies practitioner of sport. Baeth holds a doctorate in Kinesiology from the University of Minnesota, with a concentration in Sport Sociology.

While there, Baeth was a research assistant in the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport. In 2018, Baeth received a research grant through the NCAA for her work on gender performances amongst women with career longevity in Division-I coaching.

Beyond her scholarly pursuits, Baeth is a perennial coach and advocate for cultural awareness in sport spaces. Prior to her doctorate, Baeth earned a Master's in Exercise and Sport Studies from Smith College and was the Head Field Hockey Coach at Oberlin College and Conservatory. She founded the not-for-profit organization, Chester Neighborhood Bike Works, while at Swarthmore College where she played field hockey and lacrosse and majored in Sociology/ Anthropology, Educational Studies and Peace Studies.

**Dr Erik Denison (he/him)** is a research fellow with the Faculty of Education and BehaviourWorks Australia at Monash University. He is a social psychologist with a research focus on identifying effective ways to change exclusionary behaviours and practices in sport and other traditionally male settings.

**Dr Colleen English (she/her)** is an Associate Professor of Kinesiology at Penn State Berks. Her research is focused on philosophical issues in sport, analyzed through a feminist lens. This work is centred on issues around values, competition, masculinity and femininity, and narrative in sport. In addition to her philosophic work, Colleen also engages in research in the history of sport, with an emphasis on how ideas about femininity and women's physiology limited women's participation in track and field and about the origins of roller derby as sport for women. Colleen's recent work can be found in *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* and *Sport History Review*.

Anna Goorevich (she/her) is the 2021–2022 US-UK Fulbright Postgraduate Scholar at the University of Stirling in Scotland, UK. A recent graduate of Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA, with a BA in American Studies, she is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Sport Management at the University of Stirling. Goorevich's research interests revolve around the intersections of sport, equity, youth development and gender identity. Her previous research background has involved studies of athletic leadership, gender essentialism and heteronormativity as well as gender inequity in youth soccer programmes in the UK. Currently, Goorevich's Master's thesis focuses on coach-athlete relationships and communication regarding the menstrual cycle. Outside of academic pursuits, Goorevich is a coach in girls' soccer/football programmes in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Beginning in Autumn 2022, Goorevich will attend the University of Minnesota as a PhD in Kinesiology, with a concentration in Sport Sociology where she will also serve as a research assistant in the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport.

Ali Durham Greey (they/them) is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto. Their work examines the experiences of trans and non-binary people in sport and in education. Ali is a SSHRC-Joseph-Armand Bombardier Scholar and a retired member of the Canadian Olympic boxing team. Ali's work has been featured in *The Journal of Homosexuality, The Routledge Handbook of Athlete Welfare, Athlete Learning in Elite Sport*, and *Leisure Studies.* www.aligreey.com

**Dr Helen Jefferson Lenskyj (she/her)** is Professor Emerita, University of Toronto. Her work as a researcher and activist on gender and sport issues began in the 1980s, and her critiques of the Olympic industry include seven books, most recently *The Olympic Games: A Critical Approach* (Emerald, 2020). helenlenskyj.ca

Anne Lieberman (they/them) is the Director of Policy & Programs for Athlete Ally, a 3x national Muay Thai Champion and Coach, and Chair of USA Muaythai's Gender Equality Commission. Anne has an MA in Human Rights from Columbia University and a BA in African and African American Studies and Women's Studies from Fordham University. Anne is a former Fulbright Fellow and Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Research Fellow.

**Dr Lauren McCoy Coffey**, **JD** (**she/her**) is an Assistant Professor of sport management and the programme director for the Sport and Fitness Administration graduate programme at Winthrop University where she teaches sport law. Prior to joining the faculty at Winthrop, Dr Coffey was an Assistant Professor at Western Kentucky University and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. She earned her JD from Marquette University Law School, received a sport law certificate from the National Sports Law Institute based at Marquette and has a BA in American Studies from Stanford University with a concentration in race and the law in America. Her research interests include gender equity through Title IX and other legislation, addressing governance/institutional liability for discrimination in sport, and athletes' rights. In her spare time, Dr Coffey enjoys cooking and travelling with her husband and their dog.

Monica Nelson (she/her) (MA Kinesiology, University of Maryland) is an incoming doctoral student to the University of Waikato Te Huataki Waiora

School of Health (New Zealand). Reflecting her long-term and multifaceted involvement in Olympic Weightlifting – as an athlete, coach and a member of international media – her research interests are centred around critical cultural examination of strength sports, with a special emphasis on gender and the body. Her Master's thesis explored the sociocultural construction of athletic bodies in American Olympic Weightlifting, focusing on the negative impact of dominant gendered and obesity discourses on athlete health and performance. To date, her writing based on this project has been published in *Qualitative Research on Sport, Exercise and Health* and has been awarded the Barbara Brown Outstanding Student Paper Award by the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport. Monica's forthcoming doctoral research will build upon her interest in the cultural shaping of strength-training bodies by analyzing how normative conceptions of sex, gender and athleticism impact female Olympic Weightlifters' bodily practices and capacity for maximal strength.

**Dr Madeleine Pape (she/her)** is a sociologist and Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, where she is affiliated with the Institute of Sports Sciences, Centre for Gender Studies, and STS-Lab. She obtained her PhD in the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2019. Her research examines feminist and scientific debates over biological sex and how contested claims about sex difference shape the pursuit of gender equity in sport and biomedical research. Previously, Dr Pape competed internationally for Australia in the sport of track-and-field, including in the 800 m at the 2008 Olympic Games and 2009 World Championships.

**Dr Lindsay Parks Pieper (she/her)** is an Associate Professor of Sport Management and the Director of the Gender Studies Program at the University of Lynchburg, USA. She is the author of *Sex Testing: Gender Policing in Women's Sports*.

**Dr Roger Pielke Jr. (he/him)** is a Professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, where he studies, writes and teaches on contested issues at the intersection of science, policy and politics.

**Dr Richard Pringle (he/him)** is Professor of Sport and Physical Education at Monash University, Australia. He is a critical qualitative researcher who examines diverse socio-cultural and pedagogical issues associated with sport, bodies, genders and sexualities.

**Dr Jaime Schultz (she/her)** is a Professor of Kinesiology at Pennsylvania State University with an affiliate faculty appointment in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. An award-winning teacher and scholar, she has published 60 articles and chapters, as well as six books, including *Qualifying Times: Points of Change in US Women's Sport* (Illinois University Press, 2014), *Women's Sport: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2018) and *Women and Sports in the United States: A Documentary Reader*, co-edited with Jean O'Reilly and Susan K. Cahn (Dartmouth College Press, 2018). She currently serves as co-editor for the University of Illinois Press's 'Sport and Society' Series. Shannon Scovel (she/her) is a PhD candidate in the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland studying the representation of women in sports and digital media. A 2017–2018 Fulbright scholar, Shannon earned her Master's Degree in Gender Studies at the University of Stirling and her undergraduate degree in Journalism at American University. Her Master's dissertation focused on the coverage of women during the 2008, 2012 and 2016 Olympics in *The Times* (UK), and her research continues to explore the relationship between gender, sport and journalism. Shannon's interest in media studies stems from her experience as a student-athlete and college wrestling reporter for NCAA.com, and she has published a book chapter on women's wrestling apparel in *Sportswomen's Apparel Around the World: Uniformly Discussed* as well as metajournalistic discourse analysis research on the legacy of Kobe Bryant. Her doctoral dissertation builds on her previous sports media research and explores how women athletes promote themselves on social media in the era of Name, Image and Likeness.

**Dr Elizabeth A. Sharrow (they/she)** is Associate Professor in the School of Public Policy and the Department of History at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She holds a PhD in Political Science and her work focuses on the politics of sex and gender in US politics and public policy. They are published in many peer-reviewed and public-facing outlets, and are funded by the National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council and the American Association of University Women, among others.

Dr Holly Thorpe (she/her) is a Professor in the Sociology of Sport and Physical Culture at the University of Waikato, Aotearoa, New Zealand. Her research focuses on sport, physical culture and gender, and she continues to seek new innovations in social theory, qualitative methods and representational styles to better understand the complexities of moving bodies and sporting cultures. She has published over 100 articles and chapters on these topics, and has authored five books and nine edited books. Her most recent books include Action Sports and the Olympic Games: Past, Present, Future (with Belinda Wheaton, Palgrave, 2022), Sport, Gender and Development: Intersections, Innovations and Future Trajectories (with Lyndsay Hayhurst and Megan Chawansky, Emerald, 2021, and Feminist New Materialisms, Sport and Fitness: A Lively Entanglement (with Julie Brice and Marianne Clark, Palgrave, 2020). She is co-editor of the Palgrave series New Femininities in Digital, Physical and Sporting Cultures (with Kim Toffoletti and Jessica Francombe-Webb). She is a recipient of Fulbright and Leverhulme Fellowships, and most recently was awarded a two-year James Cook Fellowship. Driven to do research that contributes towards social change, Professor Thorpe works closely with an array of international and national sports organizations to inform new practices, processes and policy development.

**Dr Travers (they/them)** is a Professor of Sociology at Simon Fraser University. Their recent book, *The Trans Generation: How Trans Kids (and Their Parents) Are Creating a Gender Revolution*, situates trans kids in Canada and the United States, white settler nations characterized by significant social inequality. In addition to a central research focus on transgender children and youth, Dr Travers has published extensively on the relationship between sport and social justice, with particular emphasis on the inclusion and exclusion of women, queer and trans people of all ages. Such publications include 'Women's Ski Jumping, the 2010 Olympic Games and the Deafening Silences of Sex Segregation, Whiteness and Wealth', in the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*; 'Queering Sport: Lesbian Softball Leagues and the Transgender Challenge', in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, co-authored with Jillian Deri; and 'The Sport Nexus and Gender Injustice', in Studies in *Social Justice Journal*. Dr Travers is the leader of two research teams, one focusing on gender equity in youth baseball ('Wrestling with Jello: Good Dad Masculinity in Children's Baseball', in the *Sociology of Sport Journal*) and the other on community formation and transportation policy and planning with regard to electric micromobilities (Travers rides an electric unicycle in place of automobility whenever possible). This page intentionally left blank

### List of Contributors

Anna Baeth (shelher) Erik Denison (helhim) *Colleen English (shelher)* Anna Goorevich (shelher) Ali Durham Greey (they) them) Helen Jefferson Lenskyj (shelher) Anne Lieberman (theylthem) Lauren McCoy Coffey (shel her) Monica Nelson (shelher) *Madeleine Pape (shelher)* Lindsay Parks Pieper (shel her) Roger Pielke Jr. (helhim) *Richard Pringle (helhim)* Jaime Schultz (shelher) Shannon Scovel (shelher) Elizabeth A. Sharrow (they) she) *Holly Thorpe (shelher)* Travers (theylthem)

Athlete Ally, USA Monash University, Australia Penn State Berks, USA University of Stirling, UK

University of Toronto, Canada

University of Toronto, Canada Athlete Ally, USA

Winthrop University, USA University of Waikato Te Huataki Waiora School of Health, New Zealand University of Lausanne, Switzerland

University of Lynchburg, USA University of Colorado Boulder, USA Monash University, Australia Pennsylvania State University, USA University of Maryland, USA University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA University of Waikato, New Zealand Simon Fraser University, Canada This page intentionally left blank

### Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we thank the authors who have contributed to *Justice for Trans Athletes: Challenges and Struggles*. We recognize the invaluable work done by these pioneering scholars, especially the trans athletes, activists and allies whose voices are heard in the following chapters.

We also thank Katy Mathers, Abinaya Chinasammy and the team at Emerald Publishing for their support and commitment to this project.

Helen would like to thank her children and her partner, Liz, for love and support, and Liz for her usual excellent proofreading. The impetus for the book comes from years of conversations with colleagues and friends, all of whom have influenced my thinking in unanticipated ways. Finally, it was a pleasure to collaborate with Ali on this project, and I look forward to co-editing the sequel, *Trans Resistance: Athletes' Struggle for Justice*.

Ali would like to thank Lorraine and Mer for their encouragement and support. Ali would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the following for their mentorship and support: Jessica Fields, Jen Gilbert, David Pereira, Boba Samuels, Lee Airton and Caroline Fusco. Editing this volume with Helen has been a dream come true for a junior scholar like me. Thank you, Helen, for your mentorship and friendship.

Front cover photo credit: Meredith Gamble