

WAKO RULES CHANGE – NEW SECTION - GENDER

Introduction:

On March 26, the Executive Board of the IOC made a decision and published its Policy on the Protection of the Female (Women's) Category in Olympic Sport and Guiding Considerations for International Federations and Sports Governing Bodies.

Wako follows the policies of the IOC and accordingly harmonizes the WAKO Rules and Procedures. Therefore, it is proposed to include the articles of the WAKO rules that cover the area of gender, gender equality and transgender, as follows.

New articles:

Article 2.1.2. Gender, gender equality and transgender

2.1.2.1. Gender

WAKO recognizes and accepts the gender categories as defined by the International Olympic Committee:

- **Biological sex**, which is divided into categories (male and female, based on their reproductive biology, including sex chromosomes, gonads and hormones), is distinct from gender identity, which is a person's sense of themselves as female or male or neither / nonbinary
- **Sex:** Either of the two categories, Male or Female, into which humans are divided according to their reproductive biology.
- **Biological Female (Female):** An individual who, regardless of their legal sex or gender identity, experienced female sex development usually based on their XX-chromosomes, ovaries, and estrogenic hormones.
- **Biological Male (Male):** An individual who, regardless of their legal sex or gender identity, experienced male sex development usually based on their XY-chromosomes, testes / testicles and androgenic hormones.

2.1.2.2. Gender equality

WAKO is committed to ensuring gender equality across all aspects of its activities. This commitment shall be upheld through the following principles:

- Zero tolerance for any form of discrimination based on gender
- Respect for diversity and the promotion of inclusion at all levels
- Equal opportunities and participation for all genders in both sporting activities and governance structures
- Active promotion and inclusion of women within all organizational bodies and functions
- Compliance and alignment with applicable Olympic standards and international best practices

- WAKO has divided the competition categories into male and female categories.
- Female competitors are not allowed to compete in the male categories, nor are male competitors allowed to compete in the female categories.
- The only exception where male and female competitors compete together in the same competition category is the performance of mixed teams in musical forms
- The categories are determined by age categories and weight, and are based on the age of the competitors as well as the physical and health characteristics of the male and female competitors
- The rules of fighting, techniques and scoring are the same for male and female competitors in all age categories
- All WAKO competitions, at all levels, are held simultaneously in male and female competition categories in

accordance with article 2.1.3. Kickboxers, as well as the articles in the chapters on disciplines that regulate the competition categories.

- When kickboxing is included in multi-sport events organized by sports associations (The World Games, World Combat Games, Continental Games, other multi-sports regional games), then WAKO participate with an equal number of male and female competition categories as well as an equal number of competitors in each category.

2.1.2.3. Transgender

General Principles

- WAKO recognizes the distinction between biological sex and gender identity.
- Biological sex refers to the classification of individuals as male or female based on reproductive biology, including sex chromosomes, gonads, and hormonal characteristics.
- Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of themselves as a woman, a man, or neither / non-binary.
- WAKO acknowledges that, within kickboxing, differences in strength, power, and endurance between biological males and biological females may give rise to increased safety risks, particularly for female athletes.

Objectives

The provisions of this Article are established in order to ensure:

- Fairness, safety, and integrity of competition, particularly in relation to female athletes
- Equal opportunities for female athletes in finals, podium placements, and championships
- Promotion of Olympic values, including equal representation of women's and men's competitions
- Visibility and recognition of female athletes, with the aim of inspiring and representing women and girls worldwide

Gender Category Eligibility

- The Female Category is established to ensure equal access to kickboxing for both male and female athletes while safeguarding fairness and safety.
- Eligibility for participation in any Female Category in all kickboxing disciplines and at all levels of WAKO competitions shall be limited to biological females.
- The inclusion in the Female Category of athletes who are:
 - XY transgender athletes; and/or
 - athletes with XY Differences/Disorders of Sex Development (XY-DSD), regardless of their legal sex or gender identity,

is not permitted, as participation of such athletes, particularly in kickboxing disciplines involving strength, power, and endurance, would be inconsistent with the principles of fairness, safety, and integrity in kickboxing competition.

- The inclusion in the Male Category of athletes who are XX transgender athletes is not permitted

Alignment with IOC Policy

- WAKO shall align its regulations with the applicable policies and frameworks established by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- IOC policies shall be subject to periodic review and may be amended to reflect relevant scientific, medical, ethical, and legal (including human rights) developments, as well as stakeholder feedback.
- WAKO shall review and, where necessary, amend the provisions of this Article in accordance with such developments and conclusions.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Article, WAKO adopts and applies the following definitions in accordance with IOC policy adopted by the IOC Executive Board on 26 March 2026:

- **Sex:** One of the two categories, male or female, into which humans are divided based on reproductive biology.
- **Biological Female (Female):** An individual who, regardless of legal sex or gender identity, has experienced female sex development, typically characterized by XX chromosomes, ovaries, and estrogen-dominant hormonal patterns.
- **Biological Male (Male):** An individual who, regardless of legal sex or gender identity, has experienced male sex development, typically characterized by XY chromosomes, testes, and androgen-dominant hormonal patterns.
- **Differences / Disorders of Sex Development (DSD):** Rare genetic conditions resulting in atypical sex development.
- **XY-DSD:** A form of DSD affecting biological males with the SRY gene; such individuals typically have testes and testosterone levels within the male range and are, in the vast majority of cases, androgen-sensitive.
- **Complete Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (CAIS):** A form of XY-DSD in which the body is unable to respond to androgens, including testosterone. Despite having XY chromosomes and male-range testosterone levels, individuals do not develop androgen-dependent male physical characteristics.
- **Gender Identity:** A person's internal sense of being a woman, a man, or neither / non-binary. While biological sex does not change, gender identity may evolve over time.
- **Transgender:** A person whose gender identity differs from their biological sex. Such individuals may or may not undergo medical or hormonal transition.
- **SRY Gene:** A gene typically located on the Y chromosome that initiates male sex development by triggering testosterone production.
- **Female (Women's) Category:** A competition category designated exclusively for biological females.
- **Male (Men's) Category:** A competition category designated for biological males.
- **WAKO Events:** Kickboxing events organized by the WAKO, including World and continental championships, World and Continental cups, regional and national championships and all other national or international open tournaments.

Given that this is an issue of safety for our female competitors, I ask that this proposal be discussed urgently and a decision made at the first following WAKO IF Board meeting.

Romeo Desa

WAKO Technical Director
Chairman of Rules Committee

