# English cricket set to ban transgender women from female competitions following Supreme Court ruling



English cricket is poised to implement a ban on transgender women from participating in its female competitions, in alignment with recent policy changes in football. As reported by the PA news agency, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) directors convened to evaluate legal advice following a UK Supreme Court ruling from April, which clarified that references to sex within the Equality Act pertain specifically to biological sex.

Until now, transgender women had been barred from playing in the top two tiers of elite women’s cricket since the start of 2023, yet they remained eligible to compete up to and including the third tier of domestic cricket and across recreational formats. However, the ECB is expected to alter this policy, moving towards a more restrictive stance as there is pressure to ensure consistency with decisions made by other sporting bodies.

Earlier on the same day, both the English and Scottish Football Associations announced the exclusion of trans women from women’s football, effective June 1. In an official statement, the English FA acknowledged the potential difficulties that these changes may present for those players wishing to engage with the sport in alignment with their gender identity. They are currently reaching out to the approximately 20 registered transgender women participating in the grassroots game to explain the forthcoming changes and explore avenues for continued involvement.

Fiona McAnena, director of campaigns at human rights charity Sex Matters, characterised the ECB's previous two-tier policy as "an abomination," highlighting the perceived disparity between the interests of elite competitors and the larger community of female players. She described the situation as untenable following the Supreme Court ruling, asserting that it was high time for the ECB to prioritise fairness for all women in cricket.

The Supreme Court ruling, delivered on April 16, supported the interpretation that Section 195 of the Equality Act permits the lawful exclusion of athletes from gender-affected sports based on biological sex rather than certificated sex. Following this legal clarification, several sporting bodies have begun to review their policies.

In light of these changes, Natalie Washington, a prominent campaigner with Football v Transphobia, expressed concern about the potential impact on the engagement of trans women in football. She indicated that conversations among affected players suggested a sense of resignation, with many feeling unable to participate in men’s teams for reasons related to both safety and comfort.

Further developments were noted within other sports as England Netball announced an exclusive female category for players born female, effective from September. The governing body clarified that this decision was not directly linked to the recent Supreme Court ruling but reflects a broader shift in policy. England Netball aims to accommodate three distinct gender participation categories: female, male, and mixed netball, the latter allowing competitors to participate as per their gender identity.

Additionally, the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) has initiated a review of its transgender policy, triggered by legal challenges within the sport. As policies regarding gender inclusion in sports continue to evolve, governing bodies are adapting their regulations in response to legal frameworks and ongoing discussions within the community.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bbc.com/sport/cricket/articles/c3vk40xkqy0o> - The ECB's decision to ban transgender women from elite domestic cricket from 2025 aligns with the International Cricket Council's (ICC) policy implemented in November 2023, which prohibits transgender women who have undergone male puberty from participating in international women's matches.
* <https://www.reuters.com/sports/cricket/ecb-bars-transgender-women-competing-elite-level-2024-10-18/> - The ECB's new policy, effective from 2025, bars transgender women from the top two tiers of women's cricket and The Hundred, aligning with the ICC's regulations approved last year, focusing on fairness and potential biological advantages.
* <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2025/04/britain-rules-woman-supreme-court/682511/?utm_source=apple_news> - The UK Supreme Court's ruling in April 2025 clarified that references to sex within the Equality Act pertain specifically to biological sex, influencing the ECB's decision to reevaluate its policies regarding transgender women in cricket.
* <https://www.espncricinfo.com/story/ecb-bans-transgender-women-from-elite-competitions-1455768> - The ECB's new policy bars transgender women from elite competitions but allows them to play recreationally, following the ICC's decision to ban transgender women from international cricket in November 2023.
* <https://www.easterneye.biz/england-and-wales-cricket-board-icc-transgender-roles/> - The ECB's decision to bar transgender women from women's cricket aligns with the ICC's policy updated last year to block transgender women who underwent male puberty from playing international cricket.
* <https://www.news18.com/cricket/ecb-bars-transgender-women-from-competing-at-elite-levels-9091049.html> - The ECB's previous policy allowed transgender women to compete in female-only competitions if they had written clearance from the cricket board, but the new policy, effective from 2025, will bar transgender women from the top two tiers of women's cricket and The Hundred.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/supreme-court-cricket-english-england-b2743070.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data