

Proposed CCAA Rule Changes (February 2026)

CCAA Rule 5 currently reads:

5. Only two swimmers from each team may swim for points in any event. If additional lanes are available, one registered swimmer per team per event in that age group may swim (if there is a registered swimmer from each team). Otherwise, two registered swimmers from the same team in that age group may swim. Exhibition swimmers are designated as not counting for points before the event begins. Exhibition events must be determined 24 hours in advance and mutually agreed upon by both team representatives or both coaches. If a facility only has four lanes, ONLY 6&UNDER and 8&UNDER may swim additional exhibition heats of freestyle. This may be modified by mutual agreement of team representatives or both coaches.

The task force recommends converting the current rule 5 to become 5a., with the addition of section 5b.

5. a. Only two swimmers from each team may swim for points in any event. If additional lanes are available, one registered swimmer per team per event in that age group may swim (if there is a registered swimmer from each team). Otherwise, two registered swimmers from the same team in that age group may swim. Exhibition swimmers are designated as not counting for points before the event begins. Exhibition events must be determined 24 hours in advance and mutually agreed upon by both team representatives or both coaches. If a facility only has four lanes, ONLY 6&UNDER and 8&UNDER may swim additional exhibition heats of freestyle. This may be modified by mutual agreement of team representatives or both coaches.

b. In any competitive situation where a CCAA swimmer can earn points for their team, whether in an individual event or relay event, and whether in an official dual meet or the CCAA Championship Meet, that swimmer must participate according to his or her gender at birth.

An additional vote will be taken regarding verification. This would add the following language to rule 5b. (if that language is passed). The task force was unable to come to a consensus about whether verification should be required.

The gender at birth of each CCAA swimmer must be verified through the presentation of either the swimmer's birth certificate or a note from a physician attesting to the swimmer's gender at birth. Upon presentation of this information to the team representative or a designee, the information is to be recorded and maintained by the team, but the birth certificate or doctor's note (or copies thereof) are not to be retained by the team.

The following background Information was considered by the task force during its discussions.

- **CCAA By-Laws** (adopted 4/29/1998)
https://www.swimccaa.today/resources/ccaa_bylaws.pdf
“PURPOSE : The purpose of this organization shall be to encourage participation by as

many children as possible in competitive swimming. Participation is deemed to be more important than competition.”

- **CCAA Rules** (amended May 2025)
<https://www.swimccaa.today/wp-content/uploads/ccaa-rules-amended-2025.pdf>
Key sentence with respect to USA Swimming policy:
“1. **The individual strokes and relay rules** in Article 101 of the USA Rulebook currently in effect will be enforced each year except as modified herein.”
- Tarheel Swimming Association newspaper story: “**Triangle’s largest swim league bans transgender youths; 1 team quits in protest**”
<https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/article303336131.html>
- **Tarheel Swimming Association Rulebook home page** (contains links to agendas and minutes):
<https://tsa.swimtopia.com/2019-tsa-rulebook>
Issue was raised at March 2024 meeting; vote was taken at February 2025 meeting
- **Tarheel Swimming Association’s Rulebook as of 2025:**
https://tsa.swimtopia.com/sites/s3_files/93664
From p. 6 (**Glossary**): **Gender** “Defined as biological sex (male/female) at birth (boys-male swimmers; girls-female swimmer)
From p. 36 (**Swimmer Privacy**): “No TSA Representative or club shall seek private information for swimmers of another club. Examples of private information include, but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, religious affiliation, etc.”
- Greenville News newspaper story: “**Greenville SAIL policy could hurt transgender children, ACLU and LGBTQ groups claim**” (updated 8/10/2022)
<https://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2022/08/10/greenville-sail-policy-could-hurt-transgender-children-groups-claim/7500596001/>
This article is behind a paywall - we would love to get the full version.
- **Greenville SAIL (Swim Association Invitational League) Technical Rules:**
https://sail.swimtopia.com/sites/s3_files/92858
From p. 2: “3.3. **Participants’ age** will be determined by their age at the end of the day on May 31st, with the maximum age being either 18 years old or through the year they graduate from high school, provided they are no older than age 19 on May 31st. A copy of each swimmer’s birth certificate must be retained by the Team’s SAIL Rep, or otherwise be on file with SAIL, at the time of the swimmer’s registration with SAIL for that swim year.
3.4. Participants Biological Sex shall be determined by the swimmer’s birth certificate.”
- **South Carolina Save Women’s Sports Act** (passed in 2022, South Carolina Code Section 59-1-500)

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c001.php>

“SECTION 59-1-500. Biological gender-based and coeducational school sports teams; birth certificates; remedies.

(A) For purposes of this section, a statement of a student's biological sex on the student's official birth certificate is considered to have correctly stated the student's biological sex at birth if the statement was filed at or near the time of the student's birth.

(B)(1) Interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural, or club athletic teams or sports that are sponsored by a public elementary or secondary school or public postsecondary institution must be expressly designated as one of the following based on the biological sex at birth of team members:

- (a) males, men, or boys;
- (b) females, women, or girls; or
- (c) coed or mixed, including both males and females.

(2) Athletic teams or sports designated for males, men, or boys shall not be open to students of the female sex, unless no team designated for females in that sport is offered at the school in which the student is enrolled.

(3) Athletic teams or sports designated for females, women, or girls shall not be open to students of the male sex.

(4) A private school or a private institution sponsoring an athletic team or sport in which its students or teams compete against a public school or institution must also comply with this section for the applicable team or sport.

(C)(1) A student who is deprived of an athletic opportunity or suffers any direct or indirect harm as a result of a violation of this section may initiate a cause of action against the school or postsecondary institution as provided in subsection (C)(4).

(2) A student who is subject to retaliation or other adverse action by a school, postsecondary institution, or athletic association or organization as a result of reporting a violation of this section to an employee or representative of the school, institution, or athletic association or organization, or to any state or federal agency with oversight of schools or postsecondary institutions in this State, may initiate a cause of action against the school, postsecondary institution, or athletic association or organization as provided in subsection (C)(4).

(3) A school or postsecondary institution that suffers any direct or indirect harm as a result of a violation of this section may initiate a cause of action against the governmental entity, licensing or accrediting organization or athletic association or organization as provided in subsection (C)(4).

(4) An action arising under this section must be commenced within two years after the alleged injury and subject to the South Carolina Tort Claims Act, as provided in Section 15-78-10, et seq.

HISTORY: 2022 Act No. 193 (H.4608), SECTION 3, eff May 16, 2022.

Editor's Note

2022 Act No. 193, SECTIONS 1, 2, provide as follows:

SECTION 1. This act must be known and may be cited as the 'Save Women's Sports Act'.

SECTION 2. (A) It is the intent of the General Assembly to maintain opportunities for female athletes to demonstrate their strength, skills, and athletic abilities, and to provide them with opportunities to obtain recognition and accolades, college scholarships, and numerous other long-term benefits that result from participating and competing in athletic endeavors.

(B) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) maintaining the fairness for women's athletic opportunities is an important state interest; and

(2) requiring the designation of separate sex specific athletic teams or sports is necessary to maintain fairness for women's athletic opportunities."

- **United States Executive Order 14201—Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports**

<https://swimswam.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/DCPD-202500229.pdf>

“Therefore, it is the policy of the United States to rescind all funds from educational programs that deprive women and girls of fair athletic opportunities, which results in the endangerment, humiliation, and silencing of women and girls and deprives them of privacy. It shall also be the policy of the United States to oppose male competitive participation in women's sports more broadly, as a matter of safety, fairness, dignity, and truth.”

- **USA Swimming Operating Policy Manual (updated September 2025; see p. 55)**

<https://swimswam.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/operating-policy-manual.pdf>

7(a) “Sex” shall refer to an individual's immutable biological classification as either male or female. “Sex” is not a synonym for and does not include the concept of “gender identity.”

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ThbSJP1DiBHNB8rfQwY5DOCeSfXYZqtxWT6DN0J9YpM/edit?usp=sharing>

(b) “Women” or “woman” and “girls” or “girl” shall mean adult and juvenile human females, respectively.

(c) “Men” or “man” and “boys” or “boy” shall mean adult and juvenile human males, respectively.

(d) “Female” means a person belonging, at conception, to the sex that produces the large reproductive cell.

(e) "Male" means a person belonging, at conception, to the sex that produces the small reproductive cell.

- **This question was posed to Google's Gemini AI product: "What are the information security related ramifications for recreational youth sports leagues of requiring parents to provide birth certificates of their children?"**
The requirement for parents to provide birth certificates to youth sports leagues—especially volunteer-run recreational leagues—presents significant information security risks.

In the security world, this is often referred to as a **"high-value, low-security"** scenario. The data being collected (immutable identity documents) is extremely valuable to criminals, but the entities collecting it (volunteer coaches, local boards) often lack the infrastructure to protect it.

The following analysis details the ramifications, divided into security risks, data value, and liability.

1. The Core Security Risks

The primary ramification is the creation of a massive, decentralized vulnerability point for child identity theft.

- **"The Binder Problem" (Physical Security):** In many leagues, copies of birth certificates are kept in a physical binder carried by a "team mom" or coach. This binder often sits in unlocked cars, dugouts, or sideline bags. If this binder is lost or stolen, the permanent identity documents of 12–15 children are instantly compromised.
- **Insecure Digital Storage:** If the league collects these digitally (e.g., "Email a scan to the coach" or "Upload to this Google Form"), the data is likely stored on personal, unmanaged devices.
 - **The Ramification:** A volunteer's personal email account getting hacked could expose hundreds of birth certificates. Unlike a corporate environment, these accounts rarely have advanced threat protection or audit logs.
- **Lack of Deletion Policies:** Recreational leagues notoriously lack "data lifecycle management." A birth certificate emailed to a coach in 2021 likely still sits in that coach's "Sent" or "Inbox" folder in 2025, long after the child has left the team. This creates a "zombie" dataset that is vulnerable forever.

2. The Specific Threat: Synthetic Identity Theft

The biggest ramification for the *children* is the risk of **Synthetic Identity Theft**.

- **Why it matters:** Unlike a credit card number, a birth date and place of birth cannot be changed.

- **The Mechanism:** Cybercriminals value child data because it is a "clean slate." They can pair a child's real Social Security number (often guessed or acquired elsewhere) with the birth certificate data to create a "synthetic" identity.
- **The Time Bomb:** Because children do not check their credit reports, this fraud can go undetected for **10–18 years**. A child may turn 18 and apply for student loans or a first car, only to discover their credit was ruined a decade ago.

3. Legal and Liability Ramifications for the League

For the league itself (and its board members), collecting these documents creates a toxic liability profile.

- **Negligence Claims:** If a breach occurs, the league can be sued for negligence. If the league required the documents but failed to use industry-standard encryption or physical security (which most recreational leagues do fail at), they are legally vulnerable.
- **Compliance Violations:**
 - **COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act):** If the league uses a website or app to collect this data from children under 13, they must strictly adhere to federal consent and protection laws.¹ Many local leagues inadvertently violate this.
 - **State Data Breach Notification Laws:** If a coach loses the "binder," the league may be legally required by state law to pay for identity monitoring services for every affected family and hire lawyers to manage the notification process. This cost can bankrupt a small non-profit league.

4. Better Alternatives (The "Fix")

You can advocate for these safer methods to verify age without indefinitely storing the danger.

Method	Security Level	Description

"Verify & Return"	★★★ (High)	Parents bring the physical birth certificate to the first practice. The coach looks at it, checks a box on the roster, and hands it back immediately . No copy is ever created or stored.
Third-Party Verification	★★★★★ (Best)	Use a dedicated service (e.g., National Sports ID, Sports Thread). The parent uploads the doc to the secure, encrypted service once. The service gives the league a green "Verified" checkmark. The league never touches the document.
School Records	★★ (Medium)	Accept a school report card instead. It verifies age/grade but is less valuable to identity thieves than a birth certificate.

Montgomery County Swim League (Maryland): Guidance for Gender Diverse Minor Athletes

This is the league in the Washington, D.C. area whose most well-known swimmer is Katie Ledecky. This summer league allows gender diverse swimmers to participate according to their gender identity. However, this page cites the USA Swimming policy which is now outdated. <https://mcsl.org/dynamic/safe-sport-gender-diversity>

Pew Research Center: Americans have grown more supportive of restrictions for trans people in recent years (summary of public attitudes - February 2025)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/02/26/americans-have-grown-more-supportive-of-restrictions-for-trans-people-in-recent-years/>

- What are the policies or regulations of municipalities sponsoring CCAA teams regarding youth sports and gender?
 - **Charleston County** – West County Wahoos. **From Allison Foster, Fitness & Wellness Manager for the County: Charleston County does not have a policy for youth sports and gender.**
 - **City of Charleston** –James Island Swim Team. **The City of Charleston does not have a policy regarding youth sports and gender, and stated they make decisions on a case by case basis only. They do not have plans to create (or implement) a general policy.**
 - **Goose Creek** – Crowfield

- **North Charleston** – North Charleston- Doug Fetchen said no official city policy
- **St. Andrew's Public Service District / Parks and Playground** – St. Andrew's SAPPPC does not discriminate regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ability. SAPPPC affirms the right of all youth to participate in recreational sports programs consistent with their affirmed gender identity. For all in-house programs operated solely by SAPPPC, participation will be based on self-identification rather than documentation.
 For registration purposes, a participant may register using the name and gender identity they use in daily life. SAPPPC will not require documentation, medical records, or legal documents to verify a participant's gender identity. SAPPPC recognizes that state law (House Bill 4624, 2024) restricts certain medical treatments for minors. As an Agency, SAPPPC staff will not request medical or mental health documentation related to gender identity. SAPPPC teammates and volunteers will receive training on inclusive practices, appropriate pronoun use, privacy, and anti-bullying. All participants, parents, and teammates are expected to demonstrate respect for each individual's identity and choices related to name, pronouns, and attire. For SAPPPC-operated programs, no child will be denied participation based on gender identity. However, when participating in programs sanctioned or governed by an external organization, eligibility will follow the policies of that organization as outlined below:
[LINK to full document](#)

Information Supporting Swimming by Sex Assigned at Birth

<https://www.google.com/search?q=transgender+athletes+in+youth+competitive+swimming&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&hl=en-us&client=safari>

<https://www.savewomenssport.com/the-facts>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/what-science-tells-us-about-transgender-athletes>

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=4608&session=124&summary=B>

<https://iconswomen.com/science/>

Below is an email received from a CCAA parent who is a former women's college coach:

Passing along some additional resources:

<https://www.stateofswimming.com/fond-of-womens-sport-dr-emma-hilton-the-science-that-shows-why-biological-sex-not-gender-choice-says-who-swims-as-man-or-woman/>

At the very end of this article, she mentions girls being affected by menstruation while growing up. Here is the quote:

Invading space is to be avoided if every girl in the world is not to believe that sport is void of Fair Play and the right to compete as a biological woman and is, instead, all about whether a man who identifies as a woman can race in the next lane with physical and other advantages (such as never having to worry about or be affected by menstruation when growing up) that women simply never have access to between the forceps, puberty and the stone, to borrow Joni Mitchell's poetic description of a lifetime in *Hejira*.

I do think there is an interesting point here to consider. Even if a boy who identifies as a girl (say at the age of 8 or 9) is not going through puberty, the girls in which that athlete races against may be undergoing puberty. I believe that could create an unfair advantage benefitting the biological male. In the sport of Track & Field which I coached for decades, it was common for girls to be slower during puberty. It would take some time for hormones to stabilize, and strength to catch up before we would often see girls get back to the level of performance they were pre-puberty. Most research (i.e. Tanner stages) cites the age of on-set of puberty for girls to generally be between the ages of 8-12. For boys, it is generally believed that girls hit puberty about 2 years before boys. Here is an article that illustrates this:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/puberty>

That gender differences related to ages of puberty come into play should be noted and perhaps considered when setting competition rules.

Also, I did want to note. I believe I mis-named the SC Legislation. It is the "Save Women in Sports Act." I think I called it Save Girls and Women Sports Act. At any rate, here is the link in case you need to reference the bill: https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess124_2021-2022/bills/4608.htm

Pre-puberty reference in gender differences:

<https://womenssportspolicy.org/pre-puberty-male-female-children-show-marked-differences-in-sport-performance/>

<https://journals.physiology.org/doi/full/10.1152/jappphysiol.00615.2024>

There is another interesting article I found about in utero hormone effects on physiology but I can't seem to find the article at the moment.

At any rate, I love sports and research in movement and physiology. Feel free to reach out if I can be a resource in any way. I still owe you a scholarly article regarding differences in the effects on the taper in males vs. females to follow up on a conversation from a few years ago. Unfortunately, I haven't found

much literature on the subject. Yet, strength and conditioning coaches are usually pretty quick to note that women tend to do better with consistent volume.

Below is an excerpt from a study found in the National Library of Medicine called *Circulating Testosterone as the Hormonal Basis of Sex Differences in Athletic Performance*. Full article can be found [here](#).

Observational data

There is a clear sex difference in both muscle mass and strength ([102–104](#)) even adjusting for sex differences in height and weight ([104](#), [105](#)). On average, women have 50% to 60% of men's upper arm muscle cross-sectional area and 65% to 70% of men's thigh muscle cross-sectional area, and women have 50% to 60% of men's upper limb strength and 60% to 80% of men's leg strength ([106](#)). Young men have on average a skeletal muscle mass of >12 kg greater than age-matched women at any given body weight ([104](#), [105](#)). Whereas numerous genes and environmental factors (including genetics, physical activity, and diet) may contribute to muscle mass, the major cause of the sex difference in muscle mass and strength is the sex difference in circulating testosterone.

Age-grade competitive sports records show minimal or no female disadvantage prior to puberty, whereas from the age of male puberty onwards there is a strong and ongoing male advantage. Corresponding to the endogenous circulating testosterone increasing in males after puberty to 15 to 20 nmol/L (sharply diverging from the circulating levels that remain <2 nmol/L in females), male athletic performances go from being equal on average to those of age-matched females to 10% to 12% better in running and swimming events, and 20% better in jumping events ([8](#)) ([Fig. 1](#)). Corroborative findings are provided by a Norwegian study that examined performance of adolescents in certain athletic events but without reference to contemporaneous circulating testosterone concentrations ([107](#)). The striking postpubertal increase in male circulating testosterone provides a major, ongoing, cumulative, and durable advantage in sporting contests by creating greater muscle mass and strength. These sex differences render women unable to compete effectively against men, especially (but not only) in power sports.

Information Supporting Swimming by Gender Identity

- **The Impact of Transgender Sports Participation Bans on Transgender People in the US** (UCLA School of Law)
<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/impact-trans-sports-ban-eo/>
See the last section (**Impacts of Sports Bans of Well-Being**).
- **Fact Sheet: Transgender Participation in Sports** (GLAAD - formerly the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)
<https://glaad.org/fact-sheet-for-reporters-transgender-participation-in-sports/>