



## **MAINTAINING THE GENDER MAXIMUM; CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR LGBTQ\* INDIVIDUALS: A RESOURCE FOR COACHES AND CAPTAINS**

*At the end of this resource, there is a glossary that explains any potentially unfamiliar terms.*

The USQ “gender maximum” rule exists to ensure gender diversity on rosters. USQ emphasizes gender diversity because participation in gender-integrated sports can positively impact one’s view of other genders. The most common misconception about the gender maximum rule is that it exists to “level the playing field” athletically by ensuring that teams are not composed of entirely one gender. However, the rule takes gender into consideration instead of sex, which allows players to more easily self-identify. Players who experience body dysphoria as a result of their sex, or those who do not identify within the gender binary, all have their places on the field along with self-identified men and women.

Captains and coaches play an important role in promoting gender diversity in the league, and this responsibility exists even before teams step onto the pitch for an official match. Team leaders should work on making their players feel safe and included during practices. The first step toward ensuring that the quidditch community is a safe and welcoming environment for all is making sure players feel comfortable within their own teams.



As a captain, you should ensure that your players understand the gender maximum, emphasizing the way in which it allows individuals to self-identify. You can create a welcoming environment by asking your teammates which pronouns they prefer for themselves (and remembering to use those players' preferred pronouns!). If a teammate uses problematic language or is rude to another teammate as a result of their gender identity, privately explain to them how what they say could be harmful to certain individuals.

In the **PRE-GAME MEETING**, you should inform the head referee of any players you worry may be misidentified during the game. This will ensure that all referees are aware and that no player's gender identity is challenged during a game. Do not rely on the head referee to remind you that the pre-game meeting is the time for this discussion.

**DURING THE GAME**, it is your responsibility to make sure that your team follows the gender maximum at all times. It is also vital that you allow the referees the opportunity to ensure that an opposing team is playing in accordance with the four maximum gender rule. It is not your place to publicly question the players currently on the pitch.

As a reminder, the rule is included below:

**1.5. THE FOUR MAXIMUM GENDER RULE** - A quidditch game requires each team to have a maximum of four players who identify as the same gender, excluding the seeker. The gender with which a player identifies is considered to be that player's gender; this gender may or may not be the same as that person's sex. This is commonly referred to as the "four maximum" rule.

USQ accepts those who don't identify within the binary gender system and acknowledges that not all of our players identify as male or female. USQ welcomes players of all identities and genders into our league.



The following are just a few examples of combinations of players that follow the gender maximum rule:

- 3 Male, 3 Female
- 4 Male, 2 Female
- 4 Female, 2 Male
- 3 Female, 1 Agender, 2 Male
- 4 Male, 1 Female, 1 Agender
- 2 Male, 1 Genderfluid, 2 Female, 1 Genderqueer

As long as you do not have five or more players of the same gender identity (e.g. 5 Female players and 1 Male player), any combination of genders is in line with the four maximum gender rule.

As a captain/coach, you should be mindful of your language and actions. You should set an example for your team and create a comfortable space for trans\* and non-binary individuals, both at your own practices as well as at tournaments. Here are some helpful tips for doing so:

- Do not publicly announce or question a player's gender identity.
- Use respectful, gender-neutral language ("players of all genders" as opposed to "male and female players").
- Ask people which pronouns they prefer and use their preferred pronouns. Some examples of pronouns include: she, he, ze, he, her, hir, zir.
- If one of your players tells you that you have said something that makes them uncomfortable, respect them and refrain from such comments in the future.
- If you are a captain and you hear problematic speech from your team, let your players know. A safe space starts with you!
- Learn and use preferred and respected terms as opposed to more derogatory terms.
  - Use "intersex" as opposed to "hermaphrodite"
  - Use "transsexual" and "transgender" instead of "transvestite"



Above all, listen! Recognize the difficulties that may be experienced by someone based on their sex, gender, etc. and try to understand their point of view (i.e. why they might find it off-putting or offensive when you make a joke using a gendered epithet).

## CONTACTS

Katie Stack, Membership and Finance Director ([katie.stack@usquidditch.org](mailto:katie.stack@usquidditch.org))

Sarah Takesian, Title 9 ¾ Coordinator ([sarah.takesian@usquidditch.org](mailto:sarah.takesian@usquidditch.org))



## GLOSSARY

**SEX** – This refers to the biological/physiological traits that define individuals.

**GENDER** – This refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, etc. that define individuals. This can change drastically between societies, as it is completely dependent on the social environment.

**CIS** (i.e. cisgender / cissexual) – This is a Latin term which means “on the same side [as]” and is used in gender theory to describe those whose sex and/or gender assigned at birth matches their gender identity.

**TRANS** (i.e. transgender / transsexual) – This is another Latin term which means “on the opposite side [of]” and is used to describe those who do not identify with their sex and/or gender assigned at birth. Some trans\* individuals choose to undergo a medical transition (Hormone Replacement Therapy) to feel more comfortable in their bodies, while others do not or cannot due to money / social situations / etc.

**INTERSEX** – This term may describe someone who was born with multiple sets of genitalia (such as ovaries/a uterus as well as testes), which does not allow their sex to be distinctly defined. The term “intersex” is preferred to the derogatory term “hermaphrodite.”

**GENDER BINARY** – This refers to the classification of gender in two distinct categories, in this case “male/masculine” and “female/feminine”. The gender binary is problematic because it assumes that there are a finite number of genders with which you can identify when gender can be best viewed as a sort of spectrum.

**GENDER IDENTITY** – This refers to one’s understanding of their gender.  
**Gender Expression/Presentation** – This refers to how someone may express and externally present their gender – masculine, feminine, neither, varying levels of the two, etc.



**AGENDER/GENDERLESS/GENDER-NEUTRAL** – Someone who identifies as agender or genderless does not identify as any specific gender.

**GENDERQUEER** – One who identifies as genderqueer does not identify as cisgender and may identify as agender, genderfluid, or something else entirely.

**GENDERFLUID** – Someone who is genderfluid has a gender identity which changes through genders (though not necessarily all of them, allowing for an infinite number of specific identities).

**FTM** – Refers to an individual who was female assigned at birth (FAAB) but who identifies as male.

**MTF** – Refers to an individual who was male assigned at birth (MAAB) but who identifies as female.

---

For more detailed information about gender and sex, please consult the following resources:

[Genderbread Person 2.0](#)