

Gender Inclusion and Ultimate – PUL Style

The Peterborough Ultimate League (PUL) is exceptionally proud of its history of building inclusive community in Peterborough. Since 2004, PUL has promoted a high quality brand of Ultimate that encourages competitive, non-contact play, firmly rooted in the philosophy of Spirit of the Game*, regardless of gender. We welcome and encourage participation by people of all genders. We believe the opportunity for people of all genders to play together in a recreational sport environment is important because it leads to respect between PUL community members both on and off the field.

Being gender inclusive means respecting the right of all individuals to identify their own gender -- that means you don't get to say what someone else's gender is. But what if people cheat and fake their gender to get an edge? In fact, people do not transition gender in community sports to gain competitive edge. PUL supports inclusive environments that respect every player's body and gender autonomy.

Every effort will be made to use gender inclusive language in PUL communications, and where possible PUL will also advocate for gender inclusive language at the provincial/national level. Examples may include calling players "people" and referring to "them" and "they" or organizing a "one-on-one" rather than "man" defence.

PUL encourages all players to learn about gender diversity and inclusion. The [Ontario Human Rights Commission offers a free webinar](#) that we encourage all players and especially captains and league coordinators to view.

This policy is one step toward gender inclusion and will evolve as we gain more experience and feedback. PUL commits to reviewing this policy on an annual basis and encourages players to send feedback to the [membership committee](#).

Team Ratio Rule

Teams may have a maximum of four male identified players on the field at any time. Teams can choose to play with fewer male identified players, but the other team is not required to match. Trans and non-binary players are invited to self-determine whether they should be counted as a male by considering the intention of the policy. (Please see the [Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Preventing Discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression](#).) If a player needs support with this process, they may contact their league coordinator.

The intention of the Team Ratio Rule is:

1. To ensure people of all genders have access to time on the field
2. To have some balance between teams in terms of strength, speed and size

The Team Ratio Rule is based on the following 'socio-cultural' assumptions:

1. In general, as a group, cis-men are given more opportunities and encouragement over their lifetimes to explore sport and develop their physical strength and skill.
2. In general, male bodies are stronger and faster than female bodies.

PUL acknowledges the limitations and imperfections of the Team Ratio. For example:

1. The generalizations the ratio rule is based on are not true for all individuals, i.e. many females are stronger, faster and/or larger than many males.
2. There are more than two genders. Our league is inclusive to all gender identifications and expressions, and actively includes trans and non-binary people.

Despite the limitations and imperfections of the ratio rule, we feel it is currently the best tool at our disposal to achieve the goals of gender inclusion and parity.

Gender inclusion protocol and dispute resolution

1. When referring to people in general or to a person whose preferred pronouns are unknown, use 'they.' It is acceptable to ask a person their preferred pronouns in a respectful way.
2. Everyone is required to respect each other's gender identity, expression and pronouns.
3. Trans and non-binary players are invited to self-determine whether they should be counted as male. There may be players who are counted as male, who do not use male pronouns. There may be players who use male pronouns but are not counted as male. That's ok!
4. You may assume that every team member is aware of this policy and respectfully self-selects where they should be counted (just as you assume any players understands the rules of Ultimate).
5. If you are concerned that the Team Ratio Rule is not being followed, you can ask the opposing Captain: Are you good for Team Ratio? If they say they are good, play on! Do not question any individual's gender as this discriminates against their human right. PUL believes in a foundation of team spirit and fair play; you can trust that every team member has determined their position.
6. If you are concerned that a player is abusing the Statement of Intention of the Team Ratio, do not confront that player directly or address it during a game. Following the game contact the league coordinator.

Definitions:

Spirit of the Game: Ultimate relies upon a spirit of integrity that places the responsibility for fair play on the player. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of mutual respect among competitors, adherence to the agreed upon rules, or the basic **joy** of play. (Adapted from Ultimate Canada)

Male: Cisgender men as well as trans and non-binary players who align themselves with the identities, speed and strength of boys and men for the purposes of fulfilling the Intention of the Team Ratio.

Cisgender: Someone who has a gender identity that aligns with what they were assigned at birth. The term was created for referring to "non-transgender" people without alienating transgender people.

Transgender (or Trans): Someone whose gender differs from what they were assigned at birth. Transgender people may identify as male or female, or they may choose that neither label fits them.

More information on definitions within the LGBTQ+ spectrum can be found [here](#).

Acknowledgments:

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