APPENDIX F – TRANSGENDER POLICY

In August 2023 Orienteering Ireland adopted the IOF transgender policy

Principles:

A. We support the freedom for individuals to assume their gender identity in society. That identity may differ from their biological identity.

B. Transgender athletes should not be excluded from the opportunity to participate in sporting competition.

C. The overriding sporting objective is the guarantee of fair competition. Restrictions on participation are appropriate to the extent that they are necessary and proportionate to the achievement of that objective.

D. Foot Orienteering, Mountain Bike Orienteering and Ski Orienteering are all "gender-affected" sports. Although navigation is an important part of those sports, speed through the terrain is a major determinant of an athlete's finishing time and therefore of their placing in the results. Speed is highly dependent on strength, stamina and physique.

E. TrailO is not a gender-affected sport. It does not have male and female categories. TrailO is not subject to this policy.

F. In order to provide meaningful and attractive competition for more people, orienteering (like many other sports) has sex and age categories. This recognises the effect of average differences in strength and speed between the sexes and the effects of ageing. For the sex and age categories to operate effectively and provide meaningful competition within those categories, the criteria for those categories must be observed.

G. Nothing in these guidelines is intended to undermine in any way the requirement to comply with the World Anti-Doping Code and the WADA International Standards.

H. This policy will be subject to review considering any further scientific or medical developments.

The previous policy, dated March 2017, allowed those who transition from male to female to be eligible to compete in the female category if their testosterone level was sufficiently low.

There is now clear scientific evidence that testosterone suppression does not significantly eliminate the advantages in strength, stamina and physique gained through undergoing male puberty.

AE.1 TRANSGENDER POLICY

In order to preserve the fairness of the female category, the IOF Transgender Policy is:

1. The male category is effectively an “Open” category without restriction.

2. The female category is restricted to those who either:

a. were biologically female at birth (“natal” females”) or

b. meet all of the following conditions:

i. They must not have experienced any part of male puberty either beyond Tanner Stage 2 or after age 12 (whichever comes first).

ii. Since puberty they must have continuously maintained the concentration of testosterone in their serum below 2.5 nmol/L.

iii. They must continue to maintain the concentration of testosterone in their serum below 2.5 nmol/L at all times (i.e., whether they are in competition or out of competition) for so long as they wish to retain eligibility to compete in the female category.

A transgender female who considers that she satisfies the above conditions to compete in the female category must apply to the IOF Office. She will be asked to supply medical evidence to support her application. The IOF will carefully consider the application and, if it is approved, will confirm her eligibility to compete in the female category, subject to continuing maintenance of a low testosterone level.

3. In addition to the above criteria, an athlete who was biologically female at birth, but subsequently has experienced any part of male puberty by taking testosterone, is only eligible to compete in the male category.

4. We recognise that this policy does not allow most transgender females (those who transition from male to female) to compete in the sex category corresponding to their gender identity. We recognise the distress that this will cause to some transgender females, but we have to prioritise sporting fairness for the natal females in the sport.

5. There is a very small proportion of athletes who have the DSD (Differences in Sexual Development) condition. This term is used to incorporate a number of different conditions and it is not possible to define a single rule to cover all of them. A DSD athlete is free to compete in the male category. If a DSD athlete wishes to compete in the female category, they must apply to the IOF for permission to compete in that category and must provide full details of their condition. The IOF undertakes to consider such applications sympathetically, but the application will have to be rejected if the athlete has effectively undergone male puberty or has experienced levels of testosterone above 2.5 nmol/L for a significant period.