



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on March 15, 2024

Riley Gaines, Fellow Athletes Sue NCAA over Transgender Policies

Former University of Kentucky swimmer Riley Gaines is suing the NCAA for allowing transgender athletes to compete in women's sports.

She first hinted at the lawsuit in a video posted on X: "The NCAA cannot continue to run from accountability and responsibility and upholding the federal civil rights law that is Title IX."

She and 15 current and former college athletes — including competitors in swimming, volleyball, and track — filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia on Thursday.

She said they had been working on it "diligently and strategically" for some time. Last year, they sent a [letter](#) threatening legal action unless the NCAA only allowed female-born athletes in women's sports.

The lawsuit names several schools within the University of Georgia system, as well as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). It accuses them of violating Title IX protections and rights to bodily privacy, not only making women compete against biological males, but also forcing them to share a locker room.

Gaines and her colleagues assert that NCAA's transgender participation policy undermines women's sports. They are asking for an injunction against the defendants. Their goal, stated in the suit, is to "secure for future generations of women the promise of Title IX that is being denied them and other college women."

The action amounts to yet another pushback against NCAA over this issue. The controversy reached a pitch when the organization backed University of Pennsylvania's Lia Thomas (a biological male), who won a women's Division I national championship in 2022. The event was hosted by Georgia Tech, which is why the University of Georgia system is named in the lawsuit. Gaines tied with Thomas in the 200-freestyle final at the 2022 event, but the NCAA awarded the trophy to Thomas.

Another plaintiff, Tylor Mathieu of Florida, was edged out by Thomas in the 500-freestyle competition.

The [Associated Press](#) quoted a statement from NCAA in relation to the lawsuit: "College sports are the premier stage for women's sports in America, and while the NCAA does not comment on pending litigation, the Association and its members will continue to promote Title IX, make unprecedented investments in women's sports and ensure fair competition in all NCAA championships."

In 2022 the NCAA "revised its policies on transgender athlete participation to attempt to align with national sports governing bodies," according to AP.



AP Images
Riley Gaines



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