



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 19, 2024

Oregon Track Coach Claims He Was Fired for “Fighting for Female Sports”

An Oregon high-school track and field coach claims he was fired by the district overseeing the Lake Oswego High School track team for questioning the state’s inclusion of biologically male athletes in female sports. John Parks claims his contract was terminated after he wrote letters advocating for changes in state rules regarding transgendered athletes.

According to [KATU](#), Parks wrote letters to Peter Weber of the Oregon Student Activities Association (OSAA) and state Senator Rob Wagner, in which he argued for changes to state policy on transgendered athletes. Parks said that there should be an “open” category for transgendered athletes similar to what is done for wheelchair-bound athletes.



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“The solution to trans athletes is to have an open category like a gender neutral bathroom,” Parks reportedly wrote, claiming it “Allows competition opportunities but doesn’t make a mockery of the reason females compete in their own category.”

Parks explained his thoughts on the dismissal in an e-mail to Oregon Live.

“The basic cause of my dismissal is fighting for females’ right to compete in sports fairly,” Parks wrote. “I know you are fully aware of the debates on this issue and let me say I had two transgender athletes on my team this spring and I support them like all other athletes and only seek a solution that is a win for all as we don’t need any athletes subjected to what happened last month. Instead of a fair and measured investigation I was a victim of my passion for coaching, helping female athletes.”

In his letter to Wagner, Parks contended that Oregon law regarding transgender athletes should mirror restrictions of the International Olympic Committee.

“The OSAA competition rules need to be aligned with what the rest of the world competes under,” Parks wrote. “My proposal to encourage transgender participation is to offer an open division that is so named so it doesn’t identify or discriminate but offers an opportunity to participate.”

Parks expressed concern that Oregon’s policy to include biological males in female events might be causing more harm than good. He recalled an incident in which a transgendered athlete who won a competition was booed.

“I want them to be able to participate where they’re not ‘booed,’” Parks said.

The Lake Oswego School District has confirmed that Parks is no longer employed, but has said it cannot comment further on personnel matters. Parks vows to fight the dismissal.



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“I’m going to fight now because I got wronged,” Parks said. “I ... am fighting for girls, I’m fighting for female sports, and I’m fighting that it be fair for everybody.”

At a Monday meeting of the school board, several students and parents voiced their support for Parks.

“I think that John wants the best for everybody,” Lake Oswego High School freshman Addie Rodriguez told KATU. “He wants the best for the transgender female athletes and wants the best for the rest of the female athletes, and I don’t think this had anything to do with being against transgender people.”

“It’s about making sure we have fair and safe opportunities for all of our female athletes, and that’s all that he asked for,” said Lake Oswego parent Kristen Binkley.

In April, the OSAA [affirmed](#) its commitment to allowing so-called transgender girls to compete against females:

Oregon law has long prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (ORS Chapter 659A). In 2019, the Oregon Department of Education amended its rules to provide that “sexual orientation” was defined as including “gender identity.” OAR 581-021-0045(1)(c). The Oregon Legislature likewise modified the definition of “sexual orientation” to include “gender identity.” In response, just over five years ago, the OSAA worked with the Oregon Department of Education to create a policy that was consistent with these legal protections given to students related to their gender identity, to help our member schools be in compliance with all legal requirements.

Twenty-four states have banned transgender athletes from competing in female athletics. Parks is not advocating such a ban, but simply a separate division for biological males who insist they are females. Such athletes have a distinct advantage over their female counterparts, which is the reason a girl’s division exists in the first place.



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