



Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 28, 2024

Vermont Christian School Banned from Competition for Refusing to Allow Girls to Play Against Boys

A Christian school in Vermont has been banned from competing in interscholastic sports because it will not risk the health of its female athletes by allowing them to compete against biological males. The school is now suing those in charge of the Vermont Principals' Association (VPA), the state entity who made the decision to ban them.

The ban stems from a February 2023 [incident](#) when Mid-Vermont Christian School chose to forfeit a girl's basketball game rather than allow its girls team to compete against a team featuring a boy who identifies as a girl. The ban extends to all sports and even to non-sports related competitions such as the Geo-Bee, Science and Math Fair, and Debate and Forensics League.



Thomas Northcut/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The school is [alleging](#) First Amendment violations for the state's insistence that the school accept the state's controversial stance that sex is mutable and biological differences do not matter. The school is being [represented](#) by the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).

"Vermont has an infamous record of discriminating against religious schools and families, whether it be withholding generally available public funding or denying them membership in the state's sports league because they hold religious beliefs that differ from the state's preferred views," said ADF attorney Ryan Tucker. "The state's unlawful exclusion of Mid Vermont Christian from participating in the tuition program and athletic association is the latest example of state officials trampling on constitutionally protected rights."

In a Monday interview on *Fox and Friends*, Chris Godwin, the coach of Mid-Vermont Christian's girls' team, explained his rationale for the forfeit last February.

"I've got four daughters. I've coached them all at one point in their careers playing high school basketball," Godwin said. "I've also filled in for the boys' coach when he can't make a practice, and I run those practices, and boys just play at a different speed, a different force ... than the girls play. It's a different game."

The decision to forfeit the game wasn't Godwin's alone.

"After discussions with the administration and our players and parents, we decided that instead of going against our religious beliefs that ... there are differences between male and female, we are created differently, we decided to forfeit that game and withdraw from the tournament," Godwin said. "And at that point, the state of Vermont governing body kicked us out of all athletic competitions in the state."



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The VPA explained their stance in a statement to CNN: “Mid-Vermont Christian School has every right to teach its beliefs to its own students. It cannot, however, impose those beliefs on students from other public and private schools; deny students from other schools the opportunity to play; or hurt students from other schools because of who those students are.”

Instead, the state can force its beliefs upon the Christian school by denying students the right to participate.

Godwin’s concern for the safety of his players took on a whole new meaning recently when a Massachusetts girls’ high-school basketball game had to be forfeited after a boy playing on a girls’ team injured three girls in one half, leaving an already-depleted team unable to continue. The coach of the Collegiate Charter School of Lowell (CCSL) had to pull his team from a game against KIPP Academy after the first half.

CCSL’s coach refused to condemn the opposing team or the male player, instead saying he needed his team to be healthy for upcoming playoff games.

But female sports crusader Riley Gaines likened the physical conduct the male player displayed to abuse against females.

“Trans-identified male player for Kipp Academy in MA injured 3 girls before half time causing Lowell Collegiate Charter School to forfeit,” Gaines posted on X. “A man hitting a woman used to be called domestic abuse. Now it’s called brave. Who watches this & actually thinks this is ‘compassionate, kind, and inclusive’?”

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Who watches this & actually thinks this is "compassionate,... pic.twitter.com/ZLlqYH6iAs

— Riley Gaines (@Riley_Gaines_) [February 19, 2024](#)

It all boils down to this: Does Vermont have the right to exclude a team from any interscholastic competition for acting upon its principles regarding sex and gender? ADF and the Mid-Vermont Christian School don’t think so.

“Vermont, through its education agency and sports association, has engaged in unconstitutional discrimination by requiring a Christian school and its students to surrender their religious beliefs and practices in order to receive public funds and compete in sports,” said ADF attorney Jake Reed.



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