

A Guide to Gender at OCUA

As a league committed to creating welcoming, positive and inclusive experiences for people with diverse backgrounds and experiences, OCUA has thought a lot about how we can create a safe and fun environment for people with all different gender identities. As a league that offers primarily mixed Ultimate, we are working hard to find the balance between acknowledging that many people do not identify with a male/female gender binary and reinforcing that binary by ensuring space is made for women on and off the field.

To help support and guide us in achieving this balance, OCUA has developed a gender vision statement. You can read more about that [here](#). We have also developed this guide to help you, as players, captains, volunteers and valued members of our community, understand how we have decided to approach gender at OCUA.

Before we dive in, we would like to remind you that we are experts in running Ultimate leagues. We do not pretend to be experts in the area of sex and gender. We have done our best to inform ourselves and work with members of our community who are much better thinkers in this field than we are. If we have used terminology that is not appropriate or upsetting to anyone, please reach out and let us know. We will do our best to update our work and apply what we learn going forward.

Ultimately, at OCUA, we care very little about your biological sex. We don't believe our mandate to run safe, fun and welcoming mixed Ultimate leagues requires us to know about our players' organs and biology, unless they wish to share something with us for a specific reason. We do, however, collect and use gender information in two ways: who you are and what you play.

Who You Are: Demographics

When members first create a profile on Zulu (which is the league management side of our website), they are asked to answer a question on their gender and are given the option to select one from the five options listed below:

- Woman
- Man
- Trans
- Self-Identified
- Prefer to Say

We use this information for demographics information at the league level; we may use it to conduct trend analysis, inform business decisions, or share it with organizations like the City of Ottawa. We encourage members answering this question honestly based on their gender identity. This information will not be shared with anyone outside of OCUA's administration and even then, it would be very rare for OCUA to need to look at an individual member's response to this question. We simply gather this information to ensure we are making strategic decisions about our leagues and offerings to best serve our members.

What You Play: Roster Categories

Given that OCUA is a mixed sport, we feel it is important we designate space for women players who may otherwise be bullied out of play time or consistently be forced into match ups they do not enjoy. As such, OCUA has created two roster categories that both acknowledge the need to create space for women and move away from reinforcing a strict gender binary.

This is also determined when a member creates a new account. If a player selects “woman” as their gender identity, they automatically are assigned a woman roster designation. If a player selects “man” as their gender identity, they automatically are assigned an open roster designation. If a player selects “trans”, “self-identified”, or “prefer not to say” as their gender identity, they will be asked to select their preferred roster designation – woman or open. Players who do not identify as a woman or do not wish to match up against a woman should select open, which indicates the roster spot is open to any gender.

These roster designations are entirely player driven based on how they prefer to play Ultimate. Only captains and teammates can see a player’s roster designation so that they can manage play time and subs accordingly.

Roster spots marked as women are the only players eligible to count towards the minimum requirement for women on the field. All players who prefer an open roster designation cannot play in spaces designated for women in a given point. Women, however, can play in open spaces, as open indicates the space is open to anyone, regardless of gender identity.

It is important to note that a player’s gender identity should never be questioned publicly on the field. If players have a concern, they should speak discretely to the other team’s captain. If issues cannot be resolved between captains, the issue can be escalated after the game with OCUA. Players should never be called out or made to feel uncomfortable in game.

Roster Categories in Action

Roster categories are designed to ensure teams put out the required minimum number of women for each point. They do not guarantee women will match up against women and open players will match up against open players, simply that each team will have at least a certain number of women on the field. Teams are welcomed to deploy any match up strategy they wish, as long as it is in keeping with the Spirit of the Game.