



## **Cann, Hobday, Pinches, Rogers et al v Ultimate Pool Group and World Eight Ball Federation**

*Female pool players challenge failure of governing bodies to restrict the women's category*

**Jurisdiction:** County Court and Employment Tribunal

**Sector:** Sport

**Cause of action:** Indirect sex discrimination

**Legal representation:** Peter Daly (solicitor) at Doyle Clayton

**Updates:** [The claimants' crowdfunder](#), [IEPF statement](#)

### **Summary of events**

In August 2023, three pool organisations – Ultimate Pool Group (UPG), World Eight Ball Federation (now the International Eightball Pool Federation, IEPF) and England Blackball Pool Federation (EBPF) – announced that their women's events would be for those female at birth. This was a reversal of past self-ID policy. They did this because a trans-identifying male player, Harriet Haynes, was dominating women's events.

In response, Haynes threatened all three with legal action. UPG and EIPF backed down in October 2023, reverting to their previous policy that anyone could self-identify into the women's events. EBPF did not.

A group of almost 30 women, led by six named players, planned to take UPG and EIPF to an employment tribunal or county court because of this policy reversal. The claim was for indirect sex discrimination, on the basis that the admission of biological males puts women at a particular disadvantage and is not objectively justified.

In a separate case, Harriet Haynes brought a claim for discrimination against EBPF for having refused to amend its rules to let him into its women's events.

### **Resolution**

The female players proposed to UPG and IEPF that they jointly appoint independent experts to report on whether pool is a "gender affected activity". If a sport is a gender-affected activity, the sporting body is legally permitted to exclude biological males, including trans-identifying men, from the women's category.

UPG and IEPF agreed to the proposal, and also agreed that if the independent experts showed that pool is a "gender-affected" activity, then the female category would be on the basis of sex at birth. The proceedings were paused to allow this to happen.

Two experts were jointly appointed: one an expert on human biology and one on cue sports. The two experts produced a report that found unequivocally that pool is a gender-affected activity.

On 23rd April 2025, UPG announced that, with immediate effect:

“Entry and participation in Ultimate Pool women's events are open only to biologically born women.”

IEPF followed on 3rd May, saying:

“The clear conclusion of the biological and cue sports expert who jointly authored the report was that eightball pool was a gender affected sport and that in cue sports female players have unique disadvantages compared to male players and that transgender women retain male advantages.”

Further reading: see [sex-matters.org/case-briefings](https://sex-matters.org/case-briefings)