

If You Can't Beat the Boys, Play With the Girls

I want to focus on one word, and one word only. That word is fairness. Not gender. Not transgender. Not activism. Not rights. Not perception. Simply fairness. That's the issue here, and that's where we need to keep our focus.

The question is not why a man identifies as a woman (or vice versa).

The question is this: Is it fair for a biological male to compete against biological females?

According to a story posted on Trib Live, a "A transgender woman [CeCe, formerly Craig, Telfer] who competed as a man as recently as last year won an NCAA women's track national championship on Saturday."

Yet, less than 18 months ago, in January, 2018, "Telfer finished eighth in a field of nine in the Men's 400 meters at the Middlebury Winter Classic in Vermont."

So, competing against fellow males, Telfer was second to last in a field of 9. Now, competing against females, Telfer came in first in a field of 8. That's quite a turnaround.

And Telfer did not simply win. He won decisively, finishing with a time of , more than one full second ahead of second-place finisher Minna Sveard, who ran a time of , edging out the third place finisher Sidney Trinidad, who finished in . (This picture says it all.)

So, instead of Sveard taking a first place, she ends up with a second place, despite training hard and running her best. The deck was simply stacked against her. Is that fair?

Like it or not, there's a massive difference between first and

second, between gold and silver.

And what if you were competing in the Olympics and were bumped from third (a bronze medal) to fourth (no medal at all)? How big a difference is that?

Interestingly, the story on Trib Live is positive from beginning to end.

It uses standard, LGBT terminology, identifying Telfer as a “transgender woman” and referring to her as “she.”

It quotes Telfer’s coach, Zach Emerson, who said, “It was tough conditions out here with the wind and the heat over the last three days but, as she has over the last six months, CeCe proved herself to be tough enough to handle it. Today was a microcosm of her entire season; she was not going to let anything slow her down. I’ve never met anybody as strong as her mentally in my entire life.”

And it notes that, “The NCAA allows male athletes to compete as women if they suppress their testosterone levels for a full calendar year. Before that, they compete on mixed teams—with men and women—in the men’s division but not the women’s.”

Yet, despite this glowing, LGBT-affirming coverage, readers of the article felt that the competition was not fair, as indicated by their overwhelmingly negative response to a poll contained in the article.

The poll asked, “Do you believe that a person born as a male but identifying as a female should be allowed to compete in women’s competitive sports events?”

As of this writing, 16,982 readers responded, with 4% saying, “Yes,” 4% saying, “I’m not sure,” and a staggering 92% saying, “No.”

They were shouting as one, “This is not fair!”

It doesn't mean Telfer is an evil person.

It doesn't mean Telfer is not a devoted athlete.

It doesn't mean Telfer is not deeply sincere about identifying as female.

It simply means that, when it comes to athletic competition, there's a reason men do not compete against women.

We have the NBA and the WNBA for a reason.

We have the PGA and the LGPA for a reason.

We have men's world records and women's world records for a reason.

This is biology, not bigotry; common sense, not bias.

I'm aware of the statement in the NCAA's Transgender Handbook which reads: "According to medical experts on this issue, the assumption that a transgender woman competing on a women's team would have a competitive advantage outside the range of performance and competitive advantage or disadvantage that already exists among female athletes is not supported by evidence."

To that I say, bah, humbug.

No amount of medical experts will convince me that Telfer did not have an unfair advantage competing against women. No amount of experts will convince me that Craig Telfer, who finished second to last among male competitors, did not have a biological advantage as CeCe Telfer when he finished first among females.

Writing in *World* magazine, Ray Hacke notes that, "According to the website ... 'Prior to joining [Franklin Pierce University's] women's team this season, Telfer was a mediocre D-II athlete who never came close to making it to nationals in the men's

category. In 2016 and 2017, Telfer ranked 200th and 390th, respectively, among D-II men' before sitting out the 2018 season."

Hacke continues, "If this narrative sounds eerily familiar, it should: Biologically male sprinter Terry Miller of Bloomfield High set a state record of seconds in the girls' 55 meters at Connecticut's indoor track and field championships back in February. Miller also set meet records in the 100 and 200 at Connecticut's outdoor championships last spring."

But, "Like Telfer, Miller was nowhere near elite when competing against boys. After declaring himself a girl and competing as one, Miller became a champion."

Accordingly, Hacke quotes Robert Johnson, who previously wrote on , "The fact that Telfer can change [his] gender and immediately become a national champion is proof positive as to why women's sports needs protection."

These women work hard and make great sacrifices to reach their athletic and personal goals. They are competitors, and they deserve an even playing field.

Something needs to be done to protect them. Fairness is the operative word.