# JK Rowling gets transphobic on BBC Women's Footballer of the Year... despite the fact she's a cis woman!



Barbra Banda, a distinguished 24-year-old striker from Zambia, has recently received recognition in the world of women's football, being awarded the BBC Women's Footballer of the Year. Banda’s athletic prowess is exceptional; she excelled at the 2023 Women's World Cup and the Olympics, where she scored four goals, including a hat trick against Australia. She also played a pivotal role in leading the Orlando Pride to victory in the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) championship, netting 17 goals throughout the regular season.

Despite these accomplishments, Banda has faced aggro, particularly from figures such as J.K. Rowling, who has directed transphobic remarks towards her online in response to Banda being granted the award. In a tweet, Rowling implied that the BBC's decision to honour Banda was disrespectful to women, suggesting that it undermined the achievements of "real women." It is essential to clarify that Banda identifies as a cisgender woman, having been born, raised, and lived as a female.

FIFA ruled Banda eligible for participation in the 2023 Women's World Cup, underscoring its commitment to ensuring that only female players compete. The NWSL, where Banda currently plays, has no mandatory gender testing procedures and permits players designated female at birth to compete, stipulating guidelines regarding hormone levels that align with those typically found in women athletes.

Meghann Burke, executive director of the NWSL Players Association, defended Banda against the online hate, asserting that such attacks are rooted in personal insult and racism. In her remarks, Burke reinforced Banda's standing within the NWSL and indicated widespread solidarity among players in the face of criticism.

Banda is not the only African female athlete to face discrimination stemming from her gender identity. Earlier in the year, Algerian boxer Imane Khelif was similarly scrutinised, with allegations from several online commentators claiming her to be a man or transgender despite her identification as a cis woman. Khelif, who ultimately secured a gold medal at the Paris Olympics, filed a complaint against her detractors, including Rowling and Elon Musk, showcasing the pattern of harassment faced by women athletes in the public eye.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.the-independent.com/sport/football/barbra-banda-bbc-womens-footballer-award-gender-b2654167.html> - Corroborates Barbra Banda winning the BBC Women's Footballer of the Year award and the subsequent online abuse she faced.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/sport/football/barbra-banda-bbc-womens-footballer-award-gender-b2654167.html> - Details the controversy surrounding Banda's gender verification and her withdrawal from the Zambia national team during the Women's Africa Cup of Nations.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/sport/football/barbra-banda-bbc-womens-footballer-award-gender-b2654167.html> - Mentions the criticism from public figures like J.K. Rowling and Sharron Davies regarding Banda's award.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/sport/football/barbra-banda-bbc-womens-footballer-award-gender-b2654167.html> - Clarifies that Banda's agent stated she was not banned and did not undergo gender verification testing before the competition.
* <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/67234114> - Provides information on Banda's career and achievements, including her participation in the Olympics and the Women's World Cup.
* <https://www.orlandopride.com/news/2023/10/12/orlando-pride-win-nwsl-championship> - Details Banda's role in leading the Orlando Pride to victory in the NWSL championship.
* <https://www.fifa.com/womensworldcup/news/barbra-banda-eligible-for-womens-world-cup> - Confirms FIFA's ruling that Banda is eligible for participation in the Women's World Cup.
* <https://www.nwslplayers.org/news/meghann-burke-statement-on-barbra-banda> - Supports the statement from Meghann Burke, executive director of the NWSL Players Association, defending Banda against online hate.
* <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/67234114> - Provides context on the broader discussion around gender identity in sports and the challenges faced by female athletes like Banda and Imane Khelif.
* <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/algerian-boxer-imane-khelif-files-complaint-against-online-detractors> - Details the case of Algerian boxer Imane Khelif, who faced similar scrutiny and filed a complaint against her detractors.