# Transgender Swimmer Lia Thomas Loses Legal Challenge Against World Aquatics at CAS



Lia Thomas, a prominent transgender swimmer, has lost a legal challenge against World Aquatics at the Court of Arbitration for Sport, thereby ending her aspirations for the upcoming Paris Olympics. Thomas, 25, had sought to overturn rules implemented by World Aquatics in 2022 that bar individuals who have undergone any part of male puberty from competing in female categories.

In March 2022, Thomas became the first transgender athlete to win an NCAA college title. However, World Aquatics introduced new regulations following her victory in the women's 500-yard freestyle against Olympic silver medalist Emma Weyant. According to a scientific document supporting these rules, swimmers like Thomas retain physical advantages, such as greater endurance, power, speed, strength, and lung capacity, even after testosterone levels are reduced through medication.

Thomas argued that the rules were "invalid and unlawful," violating the Olympic charter and World Aquatics' constitution. However, the court concluded that she was not entitled to challenge the rules, as she is no longer a member of US swimming.

The court's decision was welcomed by World Aquatics, describing it as a significant step toward protecting women's sports. They reiterated their commitment to fairness, respect, and equal opportunities for athletes of all genders. In addition, World Aquatics has introduced an "open" category for transgender swimmers, though it has yet to take off due to a lack of participants.

The case underscores the ongoing debate over the inclusion of transgender athletes in elite sports, particularly in the context of maintaining fairness in female competitions.