



LOCAL NEWS

Controversy arises after transgender East Valley student wins state track championship

Some critics say it's not fair that the teen won first place.



Author: Amanda Roley
Published: 5:45 PM PDT May 29, 2024
Updated: 5:45 PM PDT May 29, 2024



SPOKANE VALLEY, Wash. — A transgender East Valley High School student from Spokane Valley won a Washington state track and field state championship title over the weekend. Some critics claim it wasn't a fair race.

On Saturday, the transgender student won the girl's 400-meter race in the state championship. The winner's sex was assigned male at birth.

When it came time to award medals at the podium, all the athletes cheered for one another. But when the winner's name was called, the stadium went almost silent, some even booed. Meanwhile, the other athletes put their hands behind their backs.

Beth Daranciang filmed this and the 400-meter race on her phone.

"They must have been hurting and seething inside," Daranciang said.

Daranciang told KREM 2 she went to the state meet to protest a transgender athlete competing in women's sports. She said she's against this because she calls it a biological advantage.

"Sports is not about identity. It's about pure physical competition," Daranciang said. "It should be fair. We have girls sports because boys biology advantages them in many sports."

Former Spokane firefighter Maeve Griffith said she transitioned 8 years ago. She doesn't claim to be an expert on this topic and doesn't know this student's story. But Maeve does believe everyone should be able to compete with their gender.

"I don't know this person's story, I don't know how long they've been transitioning," Griffith said. "I do know that I don't think anybody ever transitions from male to female in order to win medals."

The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) hosts the Washington state championship. They said its gender identity rules went into place 18 years ago. To their knowledge, this is the first instance of a transgender student-athlete winning a State Championship.

In a statement, the WIAA said, "The WIAA office has received numerous complaints regarding participating transgender student-athletes from around the state, but the Association does not have a current tally of received complaints."

The Spokane Odyssey Youth Movement also shared this statement: "Odyssey Youth Movement staff, mentors, & participants would like to extend our congratulations to Veronica and the East Valley team on their recent win. Odyssey is in full support of students who are competing in WIAA sports being allowed to participate in events & on teams that align with their gender identity and for transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse youth to have the same rights & opportunities as their cisgender peers. School activities and extracurriculars are designed for the growth and development of ALL students and we as a community should be working together to support & uplift every student in Washington State."

The East Valley School District did not respond to a request for an interview with the student.

