

THE RACE OF CASTER SEMENYA

1991- BEFORE TOMORROW






HER RACE CONTINUES



Caster Semenya is a South African middle-distance runner who has been at the center of one of the most controversial and divisive issues in sports over the last decade. Born on January 7, 1991, in Ga-Masehlong, South Africa, Semenya showed a talent for running from an early age. She first came to international attention in 2009, when she won the gold medal in the women's 800 meters at the World Championships in Berlin, Germany, in a time of 1:55.45. However, her victory was quickly overshadowed by controversy when it was revealed that she had been subjected to gender testing in the lead-up to the event.

Gender testing is a practice that has been used in sports since the 1960s to ensure that athletes are competing in the appropriate gender category. The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), the governing body of athletics, requires female athletes with certain conditions that result in hyperandrogenism, or high levels of testosterone, to undergo testing to determine their eligibility to compete in women's events. This is because testosterone is a hormone that is typically associated with male physiology and can confer certain advantages, such as increased muscle mass and strength, that may give athletes with high levels of the hormone an unfair advantage over their competitors.



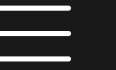


Semenya was subjected to gender testing after her victory in Berlin because of her muscular physique and deep voice, which some officials believed were indicative of a condition known as hyperandrogenism. The results of the testing were never made public, but the IAAF eventually cleared Semenya to compete as a woman. However, the controversy surrounding her gender did not go away, and Semenya became the subject of intense scrutiny from both the media and the sporting world.



The controversy over Semanya's gender came to a head in 2011, when the IAAF introduced new regulations requiring female athletes with high levels of testosterone to lower their levels of the hormone in order to be eligible to compete in women's events. The new regulations, which were dubbed the "hyperandrogenism regulations," required female athletes to have testosterone levels below a certain threshold, which was set at 10 nanomoles per liter of blood. Athletes who exceeded this threshold were required to undergo medical treatment, such as hormone therapy, to lower their testosterone levels.

Semenya was one of several female athletes who were affected by the new regulations, which were widely criticized as discriminatory and scientifically unsound. Many experts argued that the link between testosterone levels and athletic performance was not well-established and that the regulations unfairly targeted athletes with certain medical conditions, such as intersex or differences of sex development (DSD) conditions, which can result in naturally high levels of testosterone. Semenya, who was diagnosed with hyperandrogenism in 2009, was one of the most vocal critics of the regulations, which she argued were an infringement on her human rights and her ability to compete at the highest level.





Semenya challenged the regulations in court, arguing that they were discriminatory and violated her right to participate in sport without discrimination. In 2019, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), the highest court in international sports, upheld the regulations, ruling that the IAAF had provided sufficient evidence that athletes with high levels of testosterone had a competitive advantage over their peers. The ruling was met with widespread criticism from human rights advocates, medical experts, and the sporting community, who argued that it was based on flawed science and would lead to the exclusion of women with certain medical conditions from participating in sports.



January 18, 1991

- Caster Semenya is born in Pietersburg (now Polokwane), South Africa.

2008

- emenya begins competing in athletics at the age of 17 and starts to gain recognition for her middle-distance running abilities.

2009

- Semenya wins the women's 800m at the African Junior Championships and the World Championships, both held in July. However, her victory at the World Championships is overshadowed by controversy over her gender.

August 2009

- The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) asks Semenya to undergo gender verification testing before allowing her to compete further in women's events. The results of the tests are not made public, but they confirm that Semenya has hyperandrogenism, a medical condition that results in higher-than-average levels of testosterone.

July 2010

- emenya returns to competition after an 11-month absence and wins the women's 800m at the African Championships in Nairobi, Kenya.

August 2012

- Semenya competes in the women's 800m at the London Olympics but finishes second, behind Russia's Mariya Savinova. Savinova is later stripped of her gold medal for doping violations.

July 2015

- Semenya wins the women's 800m at the African Championships in Durban, South Africa.

August 2016

- Semenya wins the women's 800m at the Rio Olympics, setting a national record with a time of 1:55.28.

April 2018

- The IAAF introduces new eligibility rules for female athletes with hyperandrogenism, requiring them to lower their testosterone levels through medication if they want to compete in certain events. Semenya challenges the rules, arguing that they discriminate against her and other women with natural variations in testosterone levels.

May 2019

- The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) upholds the IAAF's eligibility rules, but also expresses "serious concerns" about their practical implementation and the evidence used to justify them. Semenya announces her intention to appeal the decision to the Swiss Federal Tribunal.

September 2019

- Semenya competes in the 2000m race at the Diamond League in Zurich, Switzerland, winning in a time of 5:38.19.

September 2020

- The Swiss Federal Tribunal rules in Semenya's favor, suspending the IAAF's eligibility rules until further notice. The ruling allows Semenya and other female athletes with natural variations in testosterone levels to compete in certain events without medication.

July 2021

- Semenya misses out on competing in the women's 800m at the Tokyo Olympics after failing to meet the qualifying time. She instead competes in the 5000m race at the South African Championships, winning the event with a time of 15:52.28.

Resources

- <https://olympics.com/en/athletes/caster-semenya>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/apr/23/caster-semenya-theyre-killing-sport-people-want-extraordinary-performances>
- <https://theconversation.com/ten-ethical-flaws-in-the-caster-semenya-decision-on-intersex-in-sport-116448>
- <https://olympics.com/en/news/caster-semenya-cas-testosterone-decision-iaaf>
- <https://time.com/5942286/caster-semenya-women-sports-european-court-human-rights/>

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