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LOOK FOR WOMEN TO MAKE HISTORY IN TOKYO DESPITE NON-NEUTRAL RULES/POLICIES AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

We're excited about the significant ways [women can make history](#) at this year's Olympic Games in Tokyo, including Urbandale native and Dowling Catholic phenom Karissa Schweizer, who will compete in the 5,000-meter run in Tokyo.

However, several new restrictions and policies introduced to the games are concerning as they particularly affect women and people of color.

For example, one new restriction applied in response to COVID-19 ([no spectators allowed](#) in the Olympic venues) presents significant challenges for athletes who are also parents. Fortunately for athlete mothers, tremendous pushback has prompted a decision that [nursing mothers may bring their babies to the Olympics "when necessary."](#)

As a result of the spectator restriction, Olympic sprinter Allyson Felix (ahead of her 5th Olympic games) is partnering with Athleta and the Women's Sports Foundation to create [The Power of She Fund: Child Care Grants](#). These funds will help with childcare costs for athletes who are mothers while they travel to competitions.

Governing bodies responsible for deciding who is eligible to compete at the Olympics have also announced questionable policies including [barring all Black Lives Matter apparel and forms of protest](#) this year. The International Swimming Federation [banned some swimming caps used by Black women](#) due to their "size and configuration," perpetuating the discrimination Black athletes have also faced in schools and workplaces.

Additionally, due to naturally high testosterone levels, two women [Namibian sprinters were ruled ineligible](#) to compete, and [CeCe Telfer](#), a Black transgender woman who won the NCAA title in 400-meter hurdles, has also been barred from competing due to not meeting "eligibility requirements." The argument of the athletic governing bodies is that their *exceptional talent* would be unfair, punishing rather than rewarding extraordinary performance (similar to an argument to [discourage other gymnasts attempting to try what Simone Biles has achieved](#)).

We need to ensure that rules are neutral – eliminating the possibility of extending a status quo of sexism and racism. It's time to eliminate rules and policies that hinder the abilities of women and people of color to fully participate – at the Olympics and everywhere else.

