

TRANSADVOCATE

Reality Check: Fallon Fox and the Transgender Advantage

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Abstract

Those in her corner cite studies that show that testosterone production is diminished by several years of estrogen therapy, while adversaries contend that those studies are flawed, and that she has an unfair advantage in muscle mass. - MMA Fighting Look, she's huge! She's not just huge, she's got a fucking man's face. I [...]

Article

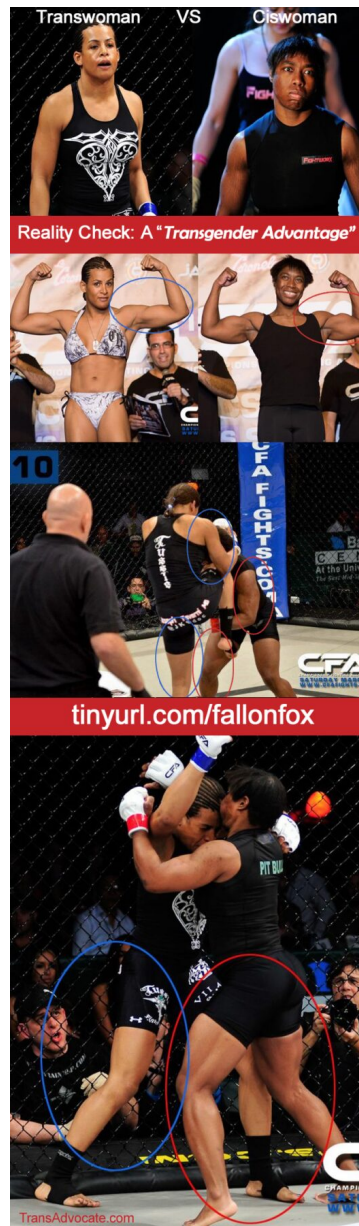


Figure 1. fallonfox-realitycheck

Those in her corner cite studies that show that testosterone production is diminished by several years of estrogen therapy, while adversaries contend that those studies are flawed, and that she has an unfair advantage in muscle mass. - MMA Fighting

Look, she's huge! She's not just huge, she's got a fucking man's face. I mean, you can wear all the lipstick you want. You want to be a woman and you want to take female hormones, you want to get a boob job, that's all fine. I support your life to live, your right to live as a woman. Fight guys, yes. She has to fight guys. First of all, she's not really a she. She's a transgender, post-op person. The operation doesn't shave down your bone density. It doesn't change. - UFC's Joe Rogan

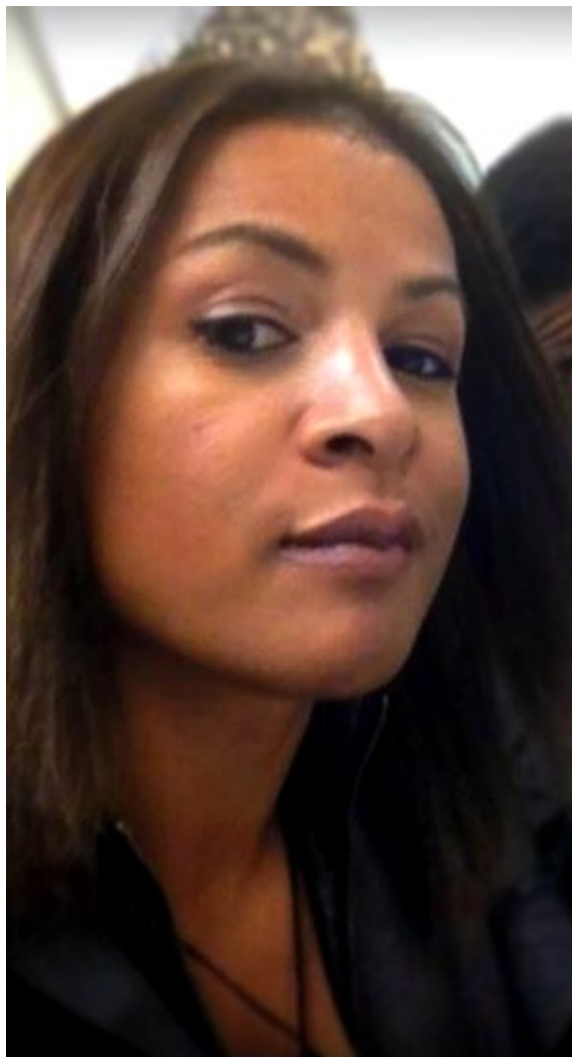


Figure 2. Fallon Fox

The above two quotes capture the essence of the various criticisms lobbed at Fox. Some of the more out there commenters seem to think that her assumed Y chromosome imbued Fox with special powers/energy (apparently something like a Pokemon) which will help her win her fights. Some assert that somehow Fox looks different from all the other MMA women. Others claim that she has really thick bones while yet others claim that her bones are extremely long which gives her a dangerous advantage over all the other women of the MMA fighting world.

Folks like the MMA doctor, Johnny Benjamin claim that organizations like the International Olympic Committee only allowed trans folk to compete (in sports including boxing and martial arts) after an international conspiracy of political correctness by the trans community forced their hand:

“‘ The IOC knows.’ The IOC knows what? The IOC caved to political and social pressure.” - Johnny Benjamin

Transphobia, sexism and vague (unfounded) claims of conspiracies seem to represent the foundations upon which all anti-Fox arguments are built.

- Either Fallon's bones are harder than all the other MMA women or they aren't.
- Either Fallon's muscles are bigger than all the other MMA women or they aren't.
- Either there really is a powerful conspiracy forcing sporting authorities (over the last several decades) to allow trans folk to compete or there isn't.
- Either a fighter's sexual appeal to males is taken into consideration when she goes through her licensing or it isn't.

There's an objective truth to be known about each of these questions.

Most measures of physical strength minimize, muscle mass decreases, bone density decreases, and they become fairly comparable to women in their musculature. After as much time as has passed in her case, if tested, she would probably end up in the same muscle mass category as her biologically born female counterpart.

- Dr. Bowers, commenting on Fallon Fox

She's been doing that [HRT] for so many years, that she probably does not have a significant advantage, if any at all. Especially because she wasn't a big man when she lived as a male. She's 5'7 and slight of build, and basically the size of an average female.

- Dr. Leis, commenting on Fallon Fox



Figure 3. Fallon Fox's post-investigation Florida fighting license clearing her to fight in women's MMA.

Perhaps Florida's boxing commission buckled and allowed Fox to fight in women's MMA after a trans conspiracy forced their hand?

About.com defines transphobia is an irrational fear of, and/or hostility towards, people who are transgender or who otherwise transgress traditional gender norms. Rational is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "having reason or understanding" and "relating to, based on, or agreeable to reason."



Figure 4. Comparing the arm of Fox's opponent by superimposing it on top of Fox's arm

If Fallon's bones aren't harder, if she isn't more muscular, if there's no trans conspiracy and there's no licensing requirement to appeal to the male gaze, then what's really the issue here?



Fallon Fox (official) shared a link.
3 minutes ago

"Several fighters are speaking from misinformation when saying that I have a physical advantage over other women fighters. Transgender women lose bone density as a result of undergoing sex-reassignment surgery and do not have any advantage over other female athletes relating to bone density. According to the University of California San Francisco Center of Excellence in Transgender Care's "Primary Care Protocol for Transgender Patient Care" concerning changes in bone density loss, I am actually at increased risk of developing osteoporosis and must remain on estrogen treatment to avoid this. <http://transhealth.ucsf.edu/trans?page=protocol-00-00> . I work with doctors addressing this very concern for myself. I hope this helps to clear up the false statements being made from those without the medical knowledge concerning my abilities. I look forward to my next fight on May 25 in Florida and appreciate opponents I will be facing."

Figure 5. Official statement from Fox: 4/13/13

What are your thoughts?

Suggested citation

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