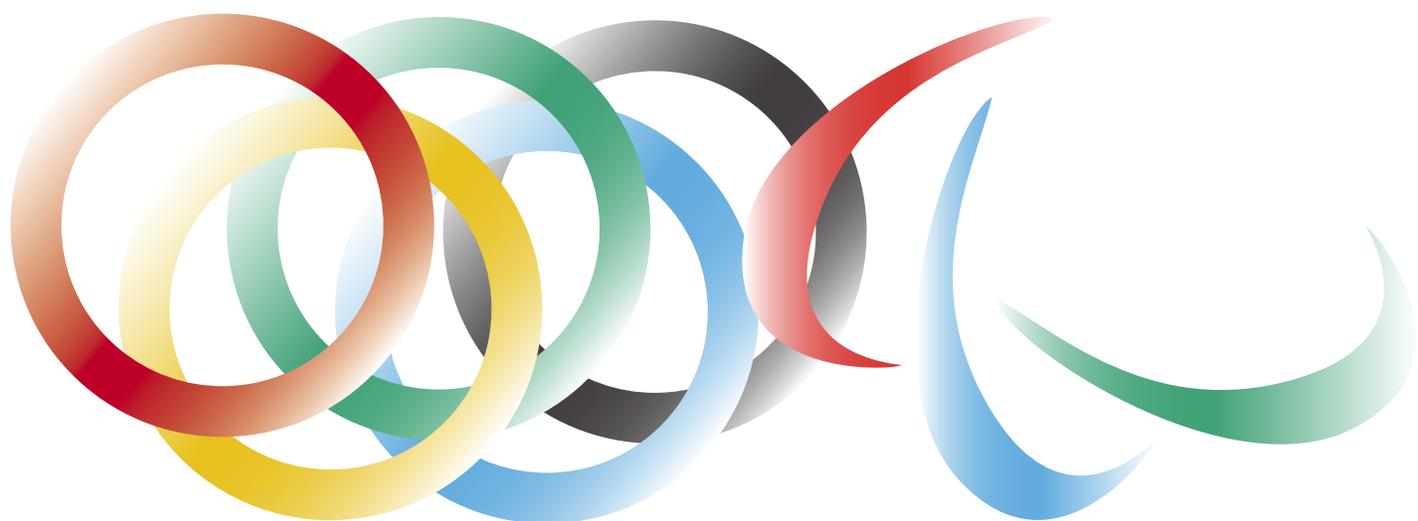


COVERING LGBTQ ATHLETES

AT THE 2022 BEIJING WINTER
OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS



CHAPTER GUIDE

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	TERMINOLOGY BASICS	4
3	PROMINENT LGBTQ ATHLETES TO WATCH	7
4	CHINESE LGBTQ CONTEXT	10
5	CHINESE LGBTQ ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS	12
6	LGBTQ ATHLETES IN CHINA	13
7	LGBTQ MILESTONES AT THE OLYMPICS & PARALYMPICS	14
8	BEST PRACTICES FOR REPORTING ON TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY ATHLETES	16
9	OLYMPIC POLICIES ON TRANSGENDER ATHLETES	18
10	SOGIESC DISCRIMINATION IN SPORTS AND A RISE IN ANTI-TRANS HATE	19
11	ANTI-TRANSGENDER ACTIVISTS AND MEDIA MISINFORMATION	21
12	EXPERT ORGANIZATIONS	23



1 INTRODUCTION

More than 31 LGBTQ athletes from 14 countries will be competing at the 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing, including the first nonbinary Winter Olympian, according to LGBTQ sports authority [Outsports.com](https://www.outsports.com). The previous 2018 Pyeongchang Games saw a record 15 out LGBTQ athletes competing, including the first out gay man to compete in a Winter Olympics.¹ At least 222 out athletes competed in the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo (because the Tokyo games were postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus, we will continue to refer to them as the 2020 Tokyo Games), but LGBTQ athletes have likely competed in the Olympics and Paralympics since the very first Games in history. We are now at an overdue moment when athletes are comfortable being out as their authentic selves, with many embraced and supported by fans, fellow competitors, and sponsors. The Games will also feature a milestone for nonbinary visibility, as Timothy LeDuc competes as a nonbinary Winter Olympian.

The 2022 Beijing Winter Games will mark the first time China has hosted the Winter Games. However, ongoing tensions about human rights abuses, which can include LGBTQ people, as well as the status of Taiwan and Hong Kong, have led to international tensions, including a diplomatic boycott by the United States and other countries. For more information about the state of LGBTQ rights in China please visit chapters 4, 5, and 6.

The growing visibility and acceptance of out athletes offers a unique opportunity for global audiences to see LGBTQ people on the world stage. LGBTQ athletes have the same basic human need to belong and—with an elite athlete’s drive to achieve—to represent their respective countries with pride, support, and dignity.

In November 2021, the IOC issued a new framework of guidelines to encourage the inclusion and safety of all athletes, and their right to participate without fear of discrimination or harm to their health and dignity.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games are a celebration of our shared humanity and represent the pinnacle of sports achievement. Including LGBTQ athletes in media coverage means exploring all their challenges and triumphs, not just their sexual orientations, gender identities, and sex characteristics. Being LGBTQ is only one aspect of who these elite athletes are, and what they bring to their sports and to the Games.

This guide will help journalists understand the history of LGBTQ participation in sport and provide facts and context to support accurate, respectful and inclusive coverage, especially of transgender athletes.

1 <https://www.outsports.com/2018/2/6/16924846/2018-winter-olympics-pyeongchang-out-gay-lesbian-bisexual-athletes>

2 TERMINOLOGY BASICS

LGBTQ

is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. The Q generally stands for queer when LGBTQ organizations, leaders, and media use the acronym. In settings offering support for youth, it can also stand for questioning. LGBT and LGBTQ+ are also used, with the “+” added in recognition of all non-straight, non-cisgender identities. Both are acceptable, as are other versions of this acronym. Specifically, when the acronym includes an “I” for intersex communities, it broadens the scope of included populations to directly add people born with diverse sex characteristics. The term “gay community” should be avoided, as it does not accurately reflect the diversity of the community. Rather, LGBTQ community or LGBTQ+ community are recommended.

SOGIESC

is an acronym for sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and sex characteristics, more commonly used in countries outside the United States. Inclusive of all sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics, to promote specific attention to human rights issues affecting intersex populations. Some also use SOGI (sexual orientation, gender identity) or SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression). The acronym refers to all humans with sexual orientations and gender identities, including cisgender and heterosexual people. So when talking about people with marginalized identities, it is important to also use words that specify the marginalized groups you’re referring to (i.e. transgender, nonbinary, lesbian, etc.).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

is the term for an individual’s enduring physical, romantic and/ or emotional attraction to members of the same and/ or other sexes, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations. Avoid the offensive term “sexual preference,” which is used to suggest that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is voluntary and therefore “curable.” People need not have had specific sexual experiences to know their own sexual orientation; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all.

GENDER IDENTITY

is a person’s internal, deeply held knowledge of their own gender. Everyone has a gender identity. For most people their gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. For transgender people, their gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Many people have a gender identity of man or woman (or, for children, boy or girl). For other people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two binary genders. Please note: gender identity is not visible to others.

GENDER EXPRESSION

refers to external manifestations of gender, expressed through a person’s name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, voice, and/ or behavior. Society classifies these external cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Most transgender people seek to align their gender expression with their gender identity to resolve the incongruence between their knowledge of their own gender and how the world “sees” them.

TERMINOLOGY BASICS

TRANSITION

is the process a person undertakes to bring their gender expression and/or their body into alignment with their gender identity. It is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time and the exact steps involved in transition will vary from person to person. Transition can include: social transition (telling family, friends, and co-workers, using a different name, using different pronouns, dressing differently, starting or stopping wearing make-up and jewelry, etc.), legal transition (changing your name and/or sex marker on documents like a driver's license, passport, Social Security record, bank accounts, etc.); medical transition (hormone replacement therapy and/or one or more surgical procedures.) These steps may also be referred to as "gender affirming care." It's important to note that being transgender is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures. A person can call themselves transgender the moment they realize that their gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth. Some transgender people may not feel they need to take any transition steps at all, while other trans people may wish to transition but cannot due to cost, underlying medical conditions, and/or fear of consequences from transphobic family, employers, etc. Avoid the phrase "sex change."

SEX CHARACTERISTICS

are physical features relating to sex, including chromosomes, genitals, gonads, hormones, and other reproductive anatomy, and secondary features that emerge from puberty.²

INTERSEX

is an umbrella term referring to people with one or more innate sex characteristics that are perceived in ways that do not fit medical and social "norms" for female or male bodies, and that give rise to risks or experiences of stigma and discrimination.³ Intersex people are a diverse population with many different intersex traits and other characteristics. Individual people with intersex variations use a variety of different terms, including being intersex, having an intersex variation or condition, or naming specific traits. Having an intersex trait is relatively common, with up to 1.7% of people born with an intersex variation.⁴ The medical community often refers to this as disorders of sex development, which is widely considered by the community as pathologizing and stigmatizing, and best avoided. Some people ameliorate the term to 'differences of sex development', but usage of this term is often indistinguishable from stigmatizing usages.

INTERSECTING AND OVERLAPPING CHARACTERISTICS:

Each of these populations can overlap, with distinct experiences that should be respected: some people might be same-sex attracted and transgender, or be same-sex attracted or transgender and have an intersex trait. An intersex woman or man might be cisgender and heterosexual.

² <http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles-en/yp10/>

³ <http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles-en/yp10/> and <https://www.ihra.org.au/sport>

⁴ <https://www.interactadvocates.org/faq/> and <https://www.ihra.org.au/allies>

TERMINOLOGY BASICS

NONBINARY VS. TRANSGENDER

Transgender is an adjective to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. People who are transgender may also use other terms, in addition to transgender, to describe their gender more specifically. Use the term(s) the person uses to describe themselves. It's important to note that being transgender is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures. A person can call themselves transgender the moment they realize that their gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth.

NONBINARY

is an adjective used by people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary gender categories of "man" and "woman." Many nonbinary people also call themselves transgender and consider themselves part of the transgender community. Others do not. Nonbinary is an umbrella term that encompasses many different ways to understand one's gender. Some nonbinary people may also use words like agender, bigender, demigender, pangender, etc. to describe the specific way in which they are nonbinary. Always ask people what words they use to describe themselves. Nonbinary is sometimes shortened to enby. Do not use NB, as that is often shorthand for non-Black. Nonbinary may also be written as "non-binary." Both forms are commonly used within the community and both are acceptable.

CISGENDER

is an adjective used to describe people who are not transgender. "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is therefore an antonym of "trans-." A cisgender person is a person whose gender identity is aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth. Currently, cisgender is a word not widely understood by most people, however, it is commonly used by younger people and transgender people. If you use cisgender in a news article, it's important to define what it means first, or you can simply say non-transgender people. Cisgender can be shortened to cis. We recommend only using the shorthand after you've used and defined the word cisgender for your audience. Note: Cisgender does not have a hyphen, nor does it need an "-ed" at the end.

3 PROMINENT LGBTQ ATHLETES TO WATCH

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics saw a record number of out LGBTQ athletes competing compared to previous years. The Beijing Winter Games will have a smaller number of out LGBTQ athletes, compared to the Summer Games, but there are already over 31 out LGBTQ Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls to watch.

Please note that this is a sample of LGBTQ athletes known at the time of publication, and will likely change.

ANDREW BLASER

(HE/HIM, USA, SKELETON RACING)

is a professional skeleton racer and one of three skeleton athletes competing for Team USA this year. Blaser won multiple gold medals at the 2018-19 Men's Skeleton North American Cup and is currently ranked 28th worldwide as well as the top American male skeleton athlete. He will be the only male athlete on Team USA's skeleton racing team and is the first out gay athlete to compete in skeleton racing at the Olympic level. Blaser has been outspoken in his experiences as a gay athlete and supporting other LGBTQ athletes.

BRITTANY BOWE

(SHE/HER, USA, SPEEDSKATING)

is a two-time Olympian and US Long Track speedskater. She earned a bronze medal at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games in Team Pursuit speedskating. Bowe is the only out LGBTQ woman athlete in Team USA and is in a long-term relationship with Dutch inline skater Manon Kamminga. She has spoken publicly and posted on social media about her relationship, as well as being an LGBTQ athlete. On January 6, Bowe became the first out Olympic athlete to qualify to represent Team USA in Beijing.

KÉVIN AYMOZ

(HE/HIM, FRANCE, FIGURE SKATING)

is a five-time French national champion figure skater and 2019 Grand Prix Final bronze medalist. He made his senior international debut in 2014 NRW Trophy competition and has competed for France at the 2021 World Championships and the 2021 World Team Trophy competitions. Aymoz is an out gay figure skater and was one of six out athletes that featured in *Faut Qu'on Parle (We Need to Talk)*, a French documentary on LGBTQ athletes. Aymoz will be making his Olympic debut at the Beijing Winter Games.

GUS KENWORTHY

(HE/HIM, GREAT BRITAIN, FREESTYLE SKIING)

is a two-time Olympian and silver medalist. His events include slopestyle and halfpipe, and he won silver at the 2017 World Championships in slopestyle skiing for Team USA. However, this winter, he is competing for Great Britain. He is very outspoken about being an out gay athlete, having discussed LGBTQ issues in various news outlets and at the GLAAD Media Awards. He is also an actor, having appeared on *American Horror Story: 1984*.

JASON BROWN

(HE/HIM, USA, FIGURE SKATING)

is a US figure skater and Olympic medalist. Brown won a bronze medal in team figure skating at the 2014 Sochi Games. He came out this year in a moving social media post, sharing his experiences as a gay athlete surrounded by supportive LGBTQ role models and allies.



JASON BROWN

SOME PROMINENT LGBTQ ATHLETES TO WATCH

IREEN WÜST

(SHE/HER, NETHERLANDS, SPEEDSKATING)

is the most decorated speed skater of all time, with 5 gold medals, 5 silver medals, and a bronze medal for a total of 11 Olympic medals. She is also the Netherlands' most successful Olympian ever, first appearing at the 2006 Torino Games and being the first out LGBTQ athlete to win a medal at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games. Wüst is openly bisexual and has spoken about her experiences in various media.

BELLE BROCKHOFF

(SHE/HER, AUSTRALIA, SNOWBOARDING)

is a two-time Olympian and has represented Australia at the FIS Snowboarding World Championships as well. She made her Olympic debut at the 2014 Sochi Games and competed in the 2018 Pyeongchang Games. Brockhoff has been very involved in LGBTQ advocacy and publicly came out prior to the 2014 Sochi Games as part of a protest against anti-LGBTQ laws in Russia.



AUSTRALIAN SNOWBOARDER BELLE BROCKHOFF FOR THE PRINCIPLE SIX CAMPAIGN, A 2014 OLYMPIC PROTEST OF RUSSIAN ANTI-GAY LAWS DURING THE SOCHI WINTER GAMES

ERIC RADFORD

(HE/HIM, CANADA, FIGURE SKATING)

is a Canadian figure skater and two-time Olympian. He won a silver medal at the 2014 Sochi Games and bronze and gold medals at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games, where he became the first out gay athlete to win a gold medal. Radford has been very vocal about being an LGBTQ athlete both in the news and on social media.

TIMOTHY LEDUC

(THEY/THEM, USA, FIGURE SKATING)

is a 2019 US Champion and 2019 World Team Trophy champion alongside figure skating partner Ashley Cain-Gribble. LeDuc is an out gay and nonbinary figure skater. They were the first out LGBTQ athlete to win the national pairs title in 2019. Named to Team USA on January 9, LeDuc will be the first out nonbinary Winter Olympian. The Games will also feature a milestone for nonbinary visibility, as Timothy LeDuc competes as a nonbinary Winter Olympian.



US FIGURE SKATER TIMOTHY LEDUC AND THEIR SKATING PARTNER ASHLEY CAIN-GRIBBLE

SOME PROMINENT LGBTQ ATHLETES TO WATCH



CANADIAN FIGURE SKATER ERIC RADFORD (RIGHT) WITH PAIRS SKATING PARTNER VANESSA JAMES, COURTESY OF DANIELLE EARL.



PAUL POIRIER

PAUL POIRIER

(HE/HIM, CANADA, FIGURE SKATING)

is a two-time Olympian and Canadian figure skater. He made his Olympic debut at the 2010 Vancouver Games and competed at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games. Poirier has been very outspoken in his experiences as an out gay athlete and how sports competitions can become more inclusive.

DANIELA IRASCHKO-STOLZ

(SHE/HER, AUSTRIA, SKI JUMPING)

is an Austrian ski jumper and two-time Olympian. Iraschko-Stolz won the silver medal at the 2014 Sochi Games in the Normal Hill ski jumping competition. She came out publicly as lesbian and is married.

SARKA PANCOCHOVA

(SHE/HER, CZECH REPUBLIC, SNOWBOARDING)

is a three-time Olympian and Czech snowboarder. Pancochova has competed at the 2010, 2014, and 2018 Winter Olympics in Big Air, Slopestyle, and Halfpipe events. She is lesbian and has been very vocal about LGBTQ rights in the Czech Republic especially; Pancochova has stated that she will not marry her girlfriend until same-sex marriage is legalized in the Czech Republic.

KIM MEYLEMANS

(SHE/HER, BELGIUM, SKELETON RACING)

is an Olympian and the first athlete to represent Belgium in skeleton racing at the 2018 Olympics. Meylemans is an out lesbian and has been vocal in the media about being an LGBTQ athlete, including the importance of athletes to be outspoken on LGBTQ issues.

EMILIA ANDERSSON RAMBOLDT

(SHE/HER, SWEDEN, ICE HOCKEY)

is a Swedish ice hockey player and three-time Olympian. She has competed at the 2010, 2014, and 2018 Winter Olympics as a defenceman for the Swedish national ice hockey team. Ramboldt came out publicly as LGBTQ in the media during the 2018 Pyeongchang Games and is one of a few out LGBTQ ice hockey athletes.

BRUCE MOUAT

(HE/HIM, GREAT BRITAIN, CURLING)

credits his athletic success to coming out as gay to a sports psychologist years ago. Mouat has won two Scottish junior championships in 2015 and 2016. He led his team to victory in the 2021 Players' Championship and the 2021 World Mixed Doubles Championship, qualifying him for the 2022 Olympics.

4 CHINESE LGBTQ CONTEXT

Chinese LGBTQ activists fighting for protection and support for the LGBTQ community rose into the mainstream in the 1990s, where activists pushed to de-stigmatize HIV/AIDS. The crime of “hooliganism” was abolished in 1997, which effectively decriminalized homosexuality, and the Chinese Psychiatric Association de-classified homosexuality as a mental illness in 2001. However, there continues to be no legal protections or recognition for LGBTQ individuals.

Over the last decade, Chinese advocates have made several moderate advances in LGBTQ acceptance, even while facing censorship and restriction from the government.

2011-2016

The Rainbow Media Awards were organized, based on the GLAAD Media Awards, to recognize media artisans and publication outlets for their coverage or featuring of LGBTQ people in China.⁵

2014

The film *Mama Rainbow*, which told the stories of six PFLAG China mothers, was censored on Chinese streaming sites. Film director, Fan Popo, filed a lawsuit against the Chinese government to restore the film, and in 2015, Fan won his lawsuit, restoring the film.⁶

2015

Ten same-sex couples won a trip to a destination wedding in West Hollywood. The winners were selected through an online video contest hosted by the e-commerce giant Alibaba, and its online shopping site Taobao.⁷

Although same-sex marriage is not legal, some couples have found alternate legal routes for legal acknowledgement; in 2019, a same-sex couple was able to become each other’s “legal guardians” while getting married overseas.

JULY 2021

WeChat, the largest social media platform in China, banned dozens of LGBTQ student organizations.⁸ Both the accounts and content of these organizations were removed without notice indefinitely.

In the past year, the Chinese government also made efforts to censor what they refer to as “feminine” men from television broadcasts, as well as celebrities from other countries like K-pop idols who appear androgynous.⁹ Similarly, the country’s state-backed gaming association began to ban video games with portrayals of “effeminate” men and same-sex relationships in their efforts to regulate the video game industry this year.¹⁰

DECEMBER 6, 2021

The Biden administration announced that the United States would engage in a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Games, citing the situation in Xinjiang and additional human rights abuses, which often includes persecution on LGBTQ organizations.¹¹ Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom followed suit, announcing their own diplomatic boycotts of the Winter Games.¹² In response, spokespeople for China’s foreign ministry dismissed the boycotts as “political posturing” and emphasized that the Chinese government had not originally invited the foreign officials.¹³

5 <https://www.glaad.org/blog/photos-glaad-chinese-rainbow-media-awards>

6 <https://www.towleroad.com/2015/12/chinese-filmmaker-wins-legal-challenge-ban-gay-themed-documentary-video/>

7 https://www.glaad.org/blog/10-same-sex-couples-china-win-destination-weddings-west-hollywood?page=22&response_type=embed

8 <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-wechat-deletes-university-lgbt-accounts-2021-07-07/>

9 <https://www.advocate.com/world/2021/9/03/chinese-bans-effeminate-sissy-men-television-broadcasts>

10 <https://www.bostonherald.com/2021/10/01/china-to-ban-video-games-promoting-effeminate-males-gay-relationships-report-says/>

11 <https://voxc.com/2021/12/10/22826798/beijing-olympics-2022-diplomatic-boycott-us-china-canada>

12 <https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/07/australia/australia-beijing-olympic-boycott-china-intl-hnk/index.html>

13 <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-dismisses-winter-olympics-boycotts-says-officials-never-invited-2021-12>

CHINESE LGBTQ CONTEXT

Taiwan, also known as the Republic of China, became the first in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage in 2019. Following this landmark achievement, LGBTQ activists are continuing to push for full legal protections and rights for same-sex couples. Taiwan also hosts an annual LGBT Pride parade in October, one of the most popular Pride celebrations in Asia; in 2020, an estimated 130,000 people attended.¹⁴

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region (SAR), which exists as a part of the People's Republic of China under the "one party, two systems" policy. Previously a British colony, Hong Kong was handed over from the UK to China in 1997, officially transferring sovereignty to the People's Republic of China.¹⁵ Same-sex couples are not allowed to marry in Hong Kong, however activists have landed other legal victories; in 2018, Hong Kong's High Court granted spousal visas to same-sex couples and in 2020, the court ruled that married same-sex couples should be able to apply for public housing.¹⁶ The mainland Chinese government continues its efforts in increasing political control over Hong Kong through forms like the National Security Law, which lesbian pop star and activist Denise Ho was arrested under in late December 2021.¹⁷

Both Taiwan and Hong Kong competed as their own delegations distinct from the People's Republic of China during the 2020 Tokyo Games. Fencer Edgar Cheung Ka Long won Hong Kong's first gold medal in 25 years, and the Tokyo Games were the most successful ever for Hong Kong.¹⁸ Hong Kong and Taiwan will be competing again as their own separate delegations at the 2022 Beijing Games as they have for previous Games.

14 <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/taiwan-hosts-biggest-person-lgbtq-pride-event-post-covid-2020-n1245610>

15 <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/01/885878557/hong-kong-residents-reflect-on-the-future-on-anniversary-of-end-of-british-rule>

16 <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/legal-challenges-look-to-advance-lgbtq-rights-in-hong-kong/>

17 <https://www.advocate.com/world/2021/12/30/lesbian-pop-star-denise-ho-arrested-hong-kong-authorities-cantopop-china>

18 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/26/we-are-hong-kong-can-the-olympics-sidestep-the-politicisation-of-sport-in-china>

5 CHINESE LGBTQ ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

LGBTQ organizations have continued to face increasing pressure and censorship from the government. Following the 2008 Beijing Games, many activists and organizations felt a surge in possibility for public advocacy work and community-building. However, the past few years have seen many challenges for individuals and organizations alike; in addition to the mass-bans on WeChat, LGBT Rights Advocacy China, an established organization working to advance the status of LGBTQ people in China, shut down amidst a rise in state efforts to target social activism.¹⁹

Although there are no government-implemented protections, LGBTQ advocacy and community-building is very vibrant across China, visible in student organizing as well as spaces like the [underground ballroom scene](#)²⁰, where queer youth have formed their own communities to express themselves and gather together. LGBTQ organizations and activists continue to be active and integral members of their communities.

Over concern about government backlash, the LGBTQ organizations that GLAAD is connected with expressed a desire to not be published or publicized in this guide. GLAAD may be able to put you in direct contact with individual advocates. Some may be comfortable speaking to the media off the record, however, reporters will need to exercise caution with LGBTQ sources in China.



OUTCHINA MEMBERS AND ORGANIZERS AT A SHANGHAI LGBTQ PRIDE EVENT, COURTESY OF OUTCHINA.

¹⁹ <https://www.axios.com/lgbt-rights-group-china-social-activism-crackdown-5fd158af-ad12-41d3-8b9d-a30510da0a95.html>

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYVepff7ucA>

6 LGBTQ ATHLETES IN CHINA

There are no known out LGBTQ athletes in China competing in this year's Olympic Games as of publication. Publicly out LGBTQ athletes are a small minority in China, but just this past September 2021, volleyball player Sun Wenjing came out on social media with her girlfriend. While criticized by some netizens, the event was met with wide praise and support. There are a few out athletes in other sports who have come out in recent years. Like elsewhere around the world, Chinese LGBTQ athletes continue to fear and face backlash from fans and the government by sharing their authentic selves. Other athletes in China face governmental challenges as well, most recently for professional tennis player Peng Shuai and her experiences with censorship.²¹

Reporters can explore how the Olympics and Paralympics have created an opportunity for LGBTQ athletes to come out, be more visible, and call for further protections for the LGBTQ community.

Li Ying (she/her, Soccer) is a forward on the Shandong Ladies, a soccer team in the Chinese Women's Super League and a member of China's national soccer team. She came out on social media with her girlfriend in June 2021, but deleted her posts and was not selected to represent China at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics despite her experience and skills.

Sun Wenjing (she/her, Volleyball) is a retired volleyball player whose coming out with her girlfriend on social media captured the attention of Chinese netizens in September 2021. Sun played on the women's team for Shandong from 2017-2018 and Beijing from 2018-2019. The Beijing team won championship that year. She retired in 2019 and has been outspoken about her relationship and being an LGBTQ athlete in China.

Xu Jingsen (he/him, Surfing) is a professional surfer and the first out gay athlete in China. He served as an ambassador at the 2018 Gay Games and his first competition was in the 2013 World Surf League's Men's Qualifying Series. Xu came out publicly on social media and has discussed his experiences being a gay athlete in China as well.

²¹ <https://.cbssports.com/tennis/news/peng-shuai-situation-explained-wta-suspends-all-tournaments-in-china-amid-censorship-of-former-world-no-1/>

7 LGBTQ MILESTONES AT THE OLYMPICS & PARALYMPICS

LGBTQ athletes have played a vital role in modern Olympic and Paralympic history, though many were not out at the time they competed.

1976

At the 1976 Games, British figure skater John Curry was outed by the press as gay shortly after winning the gold medal. Curry responded by saying the rumors were true, technically making Curry the first out gay Olympic athlete. Curry died of AIDS complications in 1994, but spoke openly about the disease in the years prior to his passing.²²

In the years prior to out Olympic athletes, many LGBTQ athletes competed in the Games while closeted. Some athletes, such as Greg Louganis and Johnny Weir, waited until their Olympic competitions were over to come out publicly. Others were not given an option. After competing in the 1928 and 1932 Olympic Games, German track runner Otto Peltzer—known as the first gay Olympic athlete—was arrested in 1934 on the charge of homosexuality, which prevented him from training and qualifying for the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Peltzer was later sent to a Nazi concentration camp.²³



SIMONA MEILER / CREDIT: OLIVER KRAUS

1982

Olympic decathlete Tom Waddell founded the Gay Games. Waddell was a decathlete in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games who was later inspired to start a gay sports event modeled on the Olympics. The event was originally marketed as the Gay Olympics, but a lawsuit filed just three weeks before the opening date forced the organizers to change the name to the Gay Games. The Gay Games have continued since, with the next event set for Hong Kong in 2022.

1988

Equestrian Robert Dover came out and became the first Olympic athlete to compete as an out gay man.²⁴

2012

We know that at least two out LGBTQ athletes competed in the Paralympics: Great Britain's Claire Harvey (Volleyball) and Lee Pearson (Equestrian), and at least 12 out LGBTQ athletes competed in the 2016 Rio Paralympics.²⁵

22 https://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/11/newsid_4504000/4504532.stm

23 <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2008/jun/29/olympicgames>

24 <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/brief-history-openly-gay-olympians-180968125/>

25 <https://www.outsports.com/2016/9/6/12731156/paralympics-lgbt-gay-athletes-out-rio>

LGBTQ MILESTONES AT THE OLYMPICS & PARALYMPICS



NEW ZEALAND WEIGHTLIFTER LAUREL HUBBARD



US FIGURE SKATER ADAM RIPPON (LEFT) AND BRITISH-AMERICAN FREESTYLE SKIIER GUS KENWORTHY (RIGHT) AT THE 29TH ANNUAL GLAAD MEDIA AWARDS IN 2018

2014

Athlete Ally, GLAAD, and All Out teamed up during the Sochi Winter Games to launch the Principle 6 campaign²⁶, which successfully lobbied for sexual orientation to be included as a protected class within the anti-discrimination Principle Six of the Olympic Charter.

2018

Adam Rippon and Gus Kenworthy became the first out gay American men to compete in the Winter Games.²⁷

2021

New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard became the first out transgender athlete to qualify for Olympic competition²⁸, followed by Canadian soccer player Quinn, who also became the first out transgender Olympic champion. American BMX Freestyle athlete Chelsea Wolfe qualified as an alternate for Team USA²⁹, making her the first transgender Team USA athlete at an Olympic competition (though not the first transgender athlete to make Team USA: Hall of Fame triathlete and All-American duathlete Chris Mosier is 6-time member of Team USA). Australian track and field athlete Robyn Lambird became the first publicly out nonbinary athlete to win a Paralympic medal.³⁰

26 <https://www.glaad.org/blog/take-action-use-principle-6-graphics-support-global-equality-olympics>

27 <https://www.people.com/sports/winter-olympics-2018-adam-rippon-gus-kenworthy-competing-openly-gay-athletes/>

28 <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/new-zealand-names-transgender-athlete-hubbard-womens-tokyo-olympics-2021-06-20/>

29 <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2021/06/18/trans-bmx-chelsea-wolfe-tokyo-olympics/>

30 <https://www.outsports.com/paralympics/2021/8/25/22641472/medal-count-paralympics-tokyo-team-lgbtq-ranking>

8 BEST PRACTICES FOR REPORTING ON TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY ATHLETES

American figure skater Timothy LeDuc is the first nonbinary Winter Olympian to compete. Their accomplishment comes after a handful of nonbinary Olympians competed in the Tokyo Summer Games, including Quinn, the first nonbinary and transgender athlete to win a medal. These guidelines will help report accurately on LeDuc and any other nonbinary athletes.

Transgender people have been participating fairly in sports for years. What's important to remember is that everyone—including trans athletes at all levels—deserves equal access to, and participation in, sports. Much media focus has been predominately on transgender athletes which is why it is addressed here, but nonbinary athletes are competing at the highest levels of sport, including the Winter Games.

It is critical that media recognize and report that transgender people have always existed throughout history and across cultures. Despite inaccurate information about transgender athletes having an “unfair advantage,” the 2020 Tokyo Games was the first time any out transgender athletes have qualified for the Games in the nearly 20 years since inclusion. For perspective, since 2004, there have been over 54,000 Olympians and Paralympians and not a single athlete has been out as transgender, until New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard qualified to compete in 2021. Hubbard did not advance past her opening rounds of competition. There is no evidence that transgender athletes have unfair advantages, or that they are dominating—or ever will dominate—sports. Incidentally, this historic moment happens to align with a tremendous backlash waged against transgender participation in sports in dozens of U.S. states and in countries across the world including the UK and New Zealand.

People look to sports and athletes to represent some of our culture's most important values: teamwork, respect, integrity, the ability to overcome adversity, inclusion, and equity. Acceptance of trans people in sport is about far more than simply the ability to play or participate; it's an overall expression of fundamental equality. **As a journalist, you have a critical role in informing the public about trans people who are athletes as well as contributing members of their teams and societies.**



BEST PRACTICES FOR REPORTING ON TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY ATHLETES

HERE ARE A FEW KEY GUIDELINES

ALWAYS USE A TRANSGENDER PERSON'S CHOSEN NAME

Many transgender people are not able to obtain a legal name change from a court. Some transgender people cannot afford a legal name change, or are not yet old enough to legally change their name, or the legal process can prove to be difficult to navigate.

ALWAYS USE CURRENT NAME AND GENDER IN HISTORICAL REFERENCES

In cases where a trans or nonbinary athlete had a career under a previous name, use their current name to refer to past events—even if those events were categorically gendered. For example: "Elliot Page is an award-winning actor; he was nominated in the Best Actress category for the 2007 film *Juno*."

ALWAYS USE A TRANSGENDER OR NONBINARY PERSON'S PRONOUNS ACCURATELY

Pronouns are a way that people are gendered in everyday language, and using the wrong pronoun (including former pronouns) signifies disrespect for a person's gender identity. If you do not know a person's pronouns, it is fine to ask: "What are your pronouns?" If it is not possible to ask a transgender or nonbinary person which pronoun they use, use the pronoun that is consistent with the person's appearance and gender expression or use the singular they. Many media outlets have updated their style guides to include singular they/them pronouns. For example: "Sam should be able to express their gender in a way that is comfortable for *them*."

AVOID FOCUSING ON MEDICAL ISSUES

It is inappropriate to ask a transgender person questions about their genitals or other surgeries they may or may not have had, as it is for any other person. Do not characterize being transgender as a mental disorder. Neither the American Psychiatric Association nor the American Psychological Association consider being transgender a "mental disorder."

TERMS TO AVOID

"BIOLOGICAL FEMALE/BIOLOGICAL MALE"

Biological sex characteristics are complex and not binary; sex characteristics like hormones, chromosomes, and anatomy vary from person to person. Use of terms like 'biological female' can be reductive and inaccurate when used to describe transgender athletes and some intersex athletes, most of whom have passed strict testing requirements that measure things like hormone levels.

"BORN MALE/BORN FEMALE"

No one is born with a gender identity. Everyone is born a baby and their gender is assigned to them by doctors and family members based on physical sex characteristics that may not correspond to their gender identity as it develops over time.

"TRANSGENDERED/TRANSGENDERISM"

Trans is an adjective used to describe a person. It is not a verb. Refer instead to transgender people, a transgender person, the transgender community.

"IDENTIFIES AS"

A transgender woman is a woman, and a nonbinary person is nonbinary. If you would not write that "Joe Biden identifies as a man," do not write that "Jacob identifies as nonbinary."

"POST-OPERATIVE/SURGERY"

Medical steps are just some of what transgender people may take as a part of their transition, but they are not required to be transgender. Some trans people have surgery, some don't. A person's genitals are no one's business and do not impact their ability to compete in any sport. Avoid asking invasive questions about surgical procedures and other gender-affirming healthcare treatments.

9 OLYMPIC POLICIES ON TRANSGENDER ATHLETES

On November 16, 2021, the International Olympic Committee released their **Framework on Fairness, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations**. The framework offers guidance to sports governing bodies on how to draft and implement eligibility criteria which upholds the right of all athletes – regardless of gender identity, expression and/or sex characteristics – to participate in sport free from discrimination. It outlines ten guiding principles centered on inclusion, prevention of harm and non-discrimination, highlighting the IOC’s intentional shift towards a rights-based approach as outlined in March 2020. Furthermore, the framework underscores that no athlete should be banned from competing based on an “alleged” or “unverified” advantage, and emphasizes that sport governing bodies must develop eligibility criteria in line with ethical, cultural, legal and medical standards rooted in credible, sport-specific research. This framework was created in collaboration through consultations with Athlete Ally and more than 250 athletes and stakeholders including medical and legal professionals and human rights advocates, and will be followed up with resources such as webinars and presentations.

Transgender athletes have always existed in sport. The International Olympic Committee has been working to explicitly include trans people in sport since the early 2000s. At the 2003 Stockholm Consensus on Sex Reassignment in Sports,³¹ convened by the IOC, new guidelines were developed for transgender athletes with three requirements for participation: athletes were required to have undergone sexual reassignment surgery, to show legal recognition of their gender, and to have undergone hormone therapy for at least two years.

In 2004, the IOC allowed transgender athletes to participate in the Olympics and Paralympics under these guidelines (however, no athletes qualified until Laurel Hubbard qualified for the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo).³²

In 2015, the IOC adopted new guidelines³³ which no longer mandated surgery, recognizing the need for updated guidance in line with current human rights standards and legislation protecting the rights of transgender people globally. The 2015 guidelines deemed transgender men athletes eligible to take part in men’s competitions “without restriction”; transgender women athletes were still required to demonstrate that their testosterone level has been below a certain level for at least one year before their first competition.³⁴ These guidelines were in place for the 2016 Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, however no openly transgender athletes competed.

The last summer’s Tokyo Games saw the first out transgender athletes competing. Any transgender athlete who qualified met the guidelines listed above. However, during the Tokyo Games, IOC medical and science director Richard Budgett admitted the 2015 guidelines, which were in place for the Olympic Games in Tokyo, were not up to par with the current science and discussions on inclusion.³⁵ Budgett announced that a new framework would be released that would cover new Olympic policies on transgender athletes. That announcement signaled the Framework on Fairness, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations, described at the beginning of this section.

31 <https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/ioc-approves-consensus-with-regard-to-athletes-who-have-changed-sex>

32 <https://www.outsports.com/2011/9/12/4051806/moment-22-international-olympic-committee-allows-transgender-athletes>

33 http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Commissions_PDFfiles/Medical_commission/2015-11_ioc_consensus_meeting_on_sex_reassignment_and_hyperandrogenism-en.pdf

34 http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Commissions_PDFfiles/Medical_commission/2015-11_ioc_consensus_meeting_on_sex_reassignment_and_hyperandrogenism-en.pdf

35 <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jul/30/ioc-admits-guidelines-for-transgender-athletes-are-not-fit-for-purpose>

10 SOGIESC DISCRIMINATION IN SPORTS AND A RISE IN ANTI-TRANS HATE

Sports remains one of the greatest socialization mechanisms in the world — it communicates values without relying on any one language, and its most successful participants are known and respected globally. Participation in sport also has powerful mental and physical health benefits. Research from [The Trevor Project](#) shows that LGBTQ youth who do participate in sports earn higher grades, and have lower rates of depression and alcohol use.³⁶ And yet, an entire community of people remain systematically excluded from sport: Research from [Human Rights Campaign](#) found that LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to drop out of sport as their peers, and that 80% or more of LGBTQ youth aren't out to their coaches.³⁷ An Out in the Fields study found that **84% of participants have witnessed or experienced homophobia in sports.**³⁸

Anti-trans discrimination in sports can even impact young cisgender children at the K-12 level. In 2017, an entire Nebraskan youth soccer team was disqualified from a tournament because an 8-year-old player was accused of “looking like a boy.”³⁹

One of the most powerful interventions to counter anti-LGBTQ discrimination in sports is education on the impact of discriminatory “locker room talk” and the importance of cultivating an inclusive environment. [The Trevor Project](#) found that **having a supportive coach can be lifesaving for LGBTQ youth, reducing the risk of suicide by 40 percent.**

2021 was the worst legislative year on record for the LGBTQ community in the U.S. As of August 1, 2021, at least 337 overall anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced in state legislatures, of which 93 have sought to ban transgender youth from sports. Ten U.S. states have enacted such bans: Idaho, Florida, South Dakota, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, West Virginia, Montana, Alabama, and Texas.

That momentum continues in 2022 legislative sessions. Anti-transgender sports bills are already being filed, with a lot of legislative action happening while the Beijing Games are airing.

The kind of gender discrimination faced by transgender athletes inevitably impacts cisgender athletes as well, especially Black women and women and girls of color with intersex variations, who often do not know they have an intersex trait until they have undergone mandatory sex testing. Two Namibian elite women's track athletes, Christine Mboma and Beatrice Masilingi, were banned in July 2021 from running the 400 meter race due to naturally high testosterone levels. World Athletics had medical testing conducted on both runners specifically because their race times were so fast that they raised suspicion, highlighting a sexist and inaccurate undercurrent that pervades much of the conversation on elite women athletes: if a woman is too fast or too strong, then she must not actually be a woman.⁴⁰ Namibia's National Olympic Committee said in a statement that neither athlete was aware that they had heightened levels of naturally occurring testosterone.⁴¹ In June 2021, South African gold medalist Caster Semenya also failed to qualify due to

36 “Research Brief: The Well-Being of LGBTQ Youth Athletes.” *The Trevor Project*. 31 August 2020.

37 “Play to Win: Improving the Lives of LGBTQ Youth in Sports.” *Human Rights Campaign*. June 2018.

38 Dennison E, Kitchen A. (2015). *Out on the Fields: The First International Study on Homophobia in Sport*. Nielsen, Bingham Cup Sydney 2014, Australian Sports Commission, Federation of Gay Games. <http://www.outonthefields.com/media/#United%20States>

39 <https://www.si.com/soccer/2017/06/05/nebraska-soccer-tournament-mili-hernandez-banned-looks-boy>

40 <https://www.cbc.ca/sports/olympics/summer/trackandfield/namibia-teenagers-out-of-olympic-400-over-testosterone-level-1.6087993>

41 <https://www.si.com/olympics/2021/07/02/namibia-sprinters-banned-olympic-events-elevated-testosterone>

SOGIESC DISCRIMINATION IN SPORTS AND A RISE IN ANTI-TRANS HATE



HULU ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY *CHANGING THE GAME*

naturally occurring levels of testosterone; Semenya has refused to take medication to suppress her hormone levels, and has challenged the policy—which she and other global human rights experts call discriminatory—in two court cases at the European Court of Human Rights.⁴²

Though women athletes with intersex variations face distinct and different issues to transgender women athletes, all women are impacted by policies that scrutinize and police women's bodies. In comparison, some prominent male athletes have been applauded for their physical differences from competitors; Olympic swimming champion Michael Phelps has been cited for his hypermobile joints, uniquely long wingspan, and the fact that his body produces significantly less lactic acid than other athletes.⁴³

⁴² https://www.espn.com/olympics/trackandfield/story/_/id/31739867/caster-semenya-fails-reach-olympic-qualifying-5000-meters-race-belgium

⁴³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/we-celebrated-michael-phelps-genetic-differences-why-punish-caster-semenya-for-hers/2019/05/02/93d-08c8c-6c2b-11e9-be3a-33217240a539_story.html

11 ANTI-TRANSGENDER ACTIVISTS AND MEDIA MISINFORMATION



HULU ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY *CHANGING THE GAME*

In the United States, a number of anti-LGBTQ activist groups have spent many years fighting against LGBTQ equality and have recently put enormous resources into attacking the transgender community, especially trans youth. In years past, these organizations focused on trying to keep LGBTQ couples from gaining marriage rights, fighting bans on conversion therapy, and enacting laws that prevent teachers from speaking about LGBTQ people in schools, for example. In the period between 2015-2018, these activist groups focused on trying to prevent trans youth from accessing restrooms and locker rooms at school. Anti-LGBTQ organizations have largely lost most of these battles, but they continue to draft model legislation, fight against LGBTQ rights in the courts, and promote misinformation on social media and in right-wing media.

Familiarizing yourself with these anti-LGBTQ groups and their recent campaigns targeting transgender access to sports in particular can help journalists place anti-trans policies and sentiment in context, and help to avoid recirculating anti-trans rhetoric. The surge in transphobia surrounding sports over the past year didn't arise from a vacuum; it is the result of consistent campaigning. Here are just a few of the most prominent groups working to restrict or abolish transgender athletes from competition. Reporters should give extra scrutiny to statements and spokespeople representing the following organizations, understanding that this current campaign is a continuation of anti-transgender (and broader anti-LGBTQ) animus.

ANTI-TRANSGENDER ACTIVISTS AND MEDIA MISINFORMATION

PROMISE TO AMERICA'S CHILDREN

Launched by a coalition of longstanding anti-LGBTQ activist groups in early 2021, Promise to America's Children is a campaign geared towards eradicating gender affirming healthcare for transgender youth, banning trans youth from sports, and preventing trans equality in schools. It offers **model legislation** to state lawmakers, promoting legislation that refers to healthcare for transgender youth as "dangerous medical experimentation."

ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM

Designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Alliance Defending Freedom or ADF is an enormous law firm with deep pockets. ADF has recruited cisgender female athletes to join its lawsuits in Idaho and Connecticut that seek to ban trans athletes from competition, and is known for filing opposing briefs in most major LGBTQ rights court cases.

FAMILY POLICY ALLIANCE

An offshoot of Focus On The Family, Family Policy Alliance is linked to state chapters around the U.S. and recently made fighting against transgender rights one of its pillar issues. The group launched a campaign called #SaveGirlsSports that inaccurately alleges trans girls have innate physical advantages over cisgender girls, and proudly takes responsibility for passing the first anti-trans sports ban in the nation (Idaho) on its **website**.

HERITAGE FOUNDATION

A right-wing think tank with extensive influence in the U.S. Republican party, Heritage Foundation cites Gender as one of its pillar issues of focus—meaning anti-transgender activism. Throughout 2021, the group has published numerous reports that inaccurately state that gender-affirming healthcare harms children (despite the fact that every major U.S. medical association supports such healthcare) and that equitable access to sports harms women. Former Vice President Mike Pence, notable for his history of anti-LGBTQ policies, is a current Heritage fellow.

FAIR PLAY FOR WOMEN

A UK-based organization formed in 2017 with the express purpose of fighting against transgender equality, Fair Play For Women works to restrict transgender women's access to sports, women's prisons, and women's restrooms and changing rooms. The group has also fought to oppose more widespread inclusive trans policies, such as changes to the UK's Gender Recognition Act that would make the process of name changes easier for trans people.

SAVE WOMEN'S SPORTS

An American group founded in 2019, Save Women's Sports resembles Fair Play For Women in that it is almost unilaterally focused on banning transgender women and girls from being able to train, qualify, and compete in women's categories. Save Women's Sports founder Beth Steltzer has spoken at events organized by the Family Policy Alliance and Heritage Foundation.

WOMEN'S SPORTS POLICY WORKING GROUP

Founded in early 2021 by former athletes (including former Olympians) and sports management analysts, none of whom are transgender. The group relies on insufficient data to reach its policy recommendations, disagrees with current NCAA and IOC standards, and inaccurately claims that trans girls and women have an inherent athletic advantage against their cisgender peers, a claim at odds with science and evidence in real-world competition.

12 EXPERT ORGANIZATIONS

ATHLETE ALLY

Athlete Ally believes sport will change the world when it welcomes and empowers all people. As a leading national nonprofit working at the intersection of sport and LGBTQI+ equality, Athlete Ally works to end the structural and systemic oppression that isolates, excludes and endangers LGBTQI+ people in sport. We educate individuals and institutions to understand obstacles to inclusion for LGBTQI+ people and how they can build an inclusive culture within their athletic communities. We work to ensure sport governing bodies, teams and leagues adopt policies that reflect the diversity of their constituents. We incubate athlete activism to advance LGBTQI+ equality in and through sport. For more information, visit www.athleteally.org or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

www.athleteally.org

Contact: joanna.hoffman@athleteally.org

OUTCHINA

OutChina is a multimedia storytelling project of China's LGBTQ community. With an estimated 70 million LGBTQ population, China is yet one of the most conservative countries towards non-cis/straight people. This project aims to raise awareness and increase visibility of this underrepresented community and provide resources to people in need.

www.chinalgbt.org

Contact: mengjue.jiang@gmail.com

OUTSPORTS

Outsports.com is the leading source for LGBTQ sports news.

www.outsports.com

Contact: Outsports@gmail.com

GLAAD

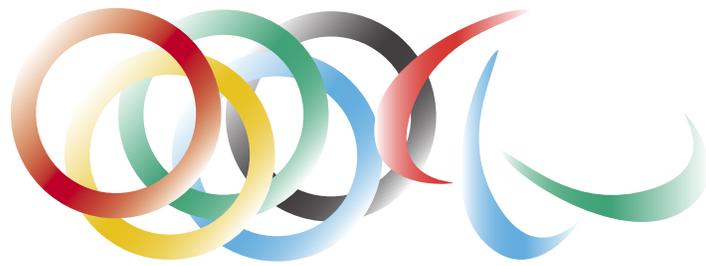
GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBTQ acceptance.

As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love. For more information, please visit www.glaad.org or connect with GLAAD on Facebook and Twitter.

www.glaad.org

Contact: press@glaad.org





The **GLAAD Media Institute** provides training, consultation, and research to develop an army of social justice ambassadors for all marginalized communities to champion acceptance and amplify media impact.

[GLAAD.org](https://www.glaad.org)



@GLAAD