

2024

LGBTQ PARIS OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GUIDE



CHAPTER GUIDE

Introduction	1
Terminology Basics	4
LGBTQ Olympic Hopefuls to Watch	8
History of LGBTQ Athletes at the Olympics and Paralympics	17
Best Practices for Reporting on Transgender and Nonbinary Athletes	19
Olympic Policies on Transgender Athletes	21
Rising Discrimination and Anti-Trans Hate in Sports	23
Anti-Transgender Activists and Media Misinformation	25
French LGBTQ Context	27
French LGBTQ Advocacy Organizations	28
LGBTQ Athletes in France	29
Expert Organizations	30

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Olympic and Paralympic Games present an opportunity to display both global camaraderie and national pride. Athletes, fans, and viewers of the games come away with an increased awareness and understanding of different cultures, communities, and ways of life. According to research by MRI-Simmons, 80% of Americans believe the Olympics is a powerful cultural event. It is important to keep in mind that representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) athletes in the Olympics and Paralympics has the potential to effect positive change culturally, politically, and interpersonally.¹

LGBTQ athletes have likely competed in the Olympics and Paralympics since the very first Games in history. We are now at a (overdue) moment when athletes are comfortable being out as their authentic selves, with many embraced and supported by fans, fellow competitors, and sponsors.² Approximately 35 openly LGBTQ athletes competed in the 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic games in Beijing. A record-setting 222 out athletes competed in the 2020 Tokyo Games (the 2020 Summer Olympics were held in 2021 having been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic; we will continue to refer to them as the 2020 Tokyo Olympics).

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, dignity, and unconditional support.

Most Olympic and Paralympic fans and viewers support LGBTQ athletes. More than two-thirds (68%) of Americans believe that all athletes, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, should have a chance to compete at the Olympics and Paralympics. 58% of Americans believe that LGBTQ athletes are a good representation of their country. Additionally, seeing LGBTQ Olympic and Paralympic athletes competing builds understanding and awareness. According to MRI-Simmons, more than 40% of Americans say that “seeing LGBTQ Olympians make[s] them interested in local policies concerning LGBTQ athletes.”³

Inclusion and non-discrimination have always been central values of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Fundamental Principle 4 of the Olympic Charter states, **“The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.”**⁴

¹ MRI-Simmons, “Trending Topics Study” (MRI-Simmons, 2024 Q1), Base: A18+.

² Matt Levietes, “At Least 35 LGBTQ Athletes Will Compete at Beijing Olympics, a Winter Games Record,” NBC News, February 4, 2022.

³ MRI-Simmons, “Trending Topics Study” (MRI-Simmons, 2024 Q1), Base: A18+.

⁴ ‘Olympic Charter’

AMERICAN OPINIONS **CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS**

80%
POWER

68%
OPPORTUNITY

63%
COMFORT

Over two thirds (68%) of Americans believe that all athletes, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, should have a chance to compete at the Olympics and Paralympics.

63% of Americans believe that by watching the Olympics, they are more comfortable with people who are different from them.

Source: MRI Trending Q1 2024, P18+.

Despite this, several international sports federations have made changes to their eligibility requirements that have diminished or eliminated opportunities for transgender and intersex athletes to compete in the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics. Often, these discriminatory policies go unnoticed with “less than half of Americans” reporting that they are aware of Olympic policies concerning transgender athletes.⁵ Policies such as those enforced by World Aquatics and World Athletics are impediments to the Olympics’ ability to honor its core values. They also prevent opportunities for understanding and awareness related to the LGBTQ community. These independent sports federations are promoting an inaccurate depiction of the world by preventing trans and intersex athletes from competing in the Olympics and Paralympics. Considering that LGBTQ individuals have always existed, it is imperative that they be represented in a manner that is authentic to their identities.



Tom Daley poses with his gold medal after winning the men’s synchronized 10m platform final at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Source: Clive Rose via Getty Images.

LGBTQ athletes have been a driving force for advancing acceptance and understanding of the queer community globally, despite the independent sports federations’ backtracking on transgender athletes. The MRI-Simmons study reports that more than 40% of Americans “would like to know if an Olympic athlete is LGBTQ so they can give them support.”⁶ By competing in the Olympics and Paralympics, LGBTQ athletes inspire others to proudly be their most authentic selves. For instance, when British diver Tom Daley won a gold medal in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, a 17-year-old British footballer, Jake Daniels, was inspired to come out publicly.⁷

5 MRI Trending Topics Q1 2024, P18+.

6 MRI-Simmons, “Trending Topics Study” (MRI-Simmons, 2024 Q1), Base: A18+

7 “Unity in Diversity: How the Olympic Games Foster Inclusion,” [Olympics.com](https://olympics.com), June 15, 2022.

At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Laurel Hubbard made history as the first known transgender athlete to qualify to compete. While Hubbard did not advance past her opening rounds of competition, her participation has undoubtedly inspired other transgender athletes to represent their countries in future Olympic Games. Unfortunately, the International Weightlifting Federation and other sports federations have changed their eligibility guidelines, blocking transgender athletes from following in Hubbard's footsteps.

Aside from eligibility requirements affecting trans and intersex athletes' ability to compete in the Olympics, 62 countries criminalize private, consensual, same-sex sexual activity between adults, and in 12 countries the relationships are punishable by death.⁸ In Uganda, the Anti-Homosexuality Act makes consensual same-sex relationships punishable by life imprisonment.⁹ Similarly, the Ghanaian parliament recently passed the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill, which requires individuals to report anyone suspected of identifying as LGBTQ to the police. The bill also criminalizes identifying as, or associating with, the LGBTQ community.

The 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games mark the third time Paris has hosted the global event, having done so first in 1900 and then in 1924. Paris is one of 2 cities—the other being London—that have had the honor of hosting 3 Olympiads. France's LGBTQ policies are generally considered inclusive, and Paris in particular has a lively queer community, but there is always work to be done. A 2023 report released by French LGBTQ organization SOS Homophobie shows that the group saw a 28% increase in physical attacks against LGBTQ people and a 26% increase in transphobic incidents in 2022. Any discussion of transgender people in sports has been a hot button issue in the media and so it is crucial that journalists and readers alike are aware of transphobic sentiments that may arise from such discussion.¹⁰

In November 2021, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) issued a new framework of guidelines to underscore that transgender athletes do not have an inherent advantage, and 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.¹¹

The Olympic and Paralympic Games are a celebration of our shared humanity and represent the pinnacle of athleticism. Including LGBTQ athletes in media coverage about the Olympics and Paralympics 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 of what they bring to their sports and to the Games.

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

EDUCATION THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE

OVER 2 IN 5



The MRI-Simmons study reports that more than 40% of Americans "would like to know if an athlete is LGBTQ so they can give them support."

LESS THAN HALF



Often, these discriminatory policies go unnoticed with "less than half of Americans" reporting that they were aware of Olympic policies concerning transgender athletes.

Source: MRI Trending Q1 2024, P18+

CHAPTER 2

TERMINOLOGY BASICS

For a fuller look into LGBTQ language and terminology, visit the GLAAD Media Reference Guide at glaad.org/reference.

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 “I” for intersex communities, it broadens the scope of included populations to 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. It is more commonly used in countries outside the United States. It is inclusive of all sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics, including intersex. 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 are 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. Most people's gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (see "cisgender"). 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). Some people's gender identity does not fit neatly into either one of those binary genders. Please note that gender identity is not visible to others. You cannot look at someone and "see" their gender identity.

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.

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 is important to note that being transgender is not dependent on physical appearance or medical procedures. A person can call themselves transgender the moment they realize that their gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

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 is 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 have 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.

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, and so on to describe the specific way 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.

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 the following:

- Social transition (telling family, friends, and coworkers, using a different name, using different pronouns, dressing differently, starting or stopping wearing makeup 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).

It is 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 from 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 costs, underlying medical conditions, and/or fear of consequences from transphobic family, employers, and so on. 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.¹²

INTERSEX is an adjective used to describe a person with one or more innate sex characteristics, including genitals, internal reproductive organs, and chromosomes that fall outside of traditional conceptions of male or female bodies. Do not confuse having an intersex trait with being transgender. Intersex people are assigned a sex at birth—either male or female—and that decision by medical providers and parents may not match the gender identity of the child.

Intersecting and Overlapping Identities:

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.

CHAPTER 3

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH

Following is a list of just a few out LGBTQ athletes who are expected to compete in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. It is important to note that, at the time of publication, the number of LGBTQ athletes competing in Paris is unclear as most athletes will continue to qualify throughout the spring and summer.



Brittney Griner of Team USA vies for the ball in the women's final basketball match against Japan during the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games at the Saitama Super Arena. Source: Aris Messins/AFP via Getty Images.

BRITTNEY GRINER (she/her) is an out lesbian and American professional basketball player for Phoenix Mercury of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). Off the court, she garnered public attention in 2022 after a months-long detention in a Russian prison. In 2014 and 2016 Briner won gold medals at the World Cups in Turkey and Spain respectively.

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH



Campbell Harrison of Australia competes in boulder during the sport climbing Olympic qualifications in Sydney in 2020. Source: Jenny Evans via Getty Images.

CAMPBELL HARRISON (he/him) is an Australian sport rock climber who publicly came out as gay in 2021 and has since striven to be a role model for young LGBTQ athletes.¹³ He spoke on a panel hosted by ClimbingQTs about LGBTQ inclusion and called climbing a “life-changing experience.” He said that his decision to come out was “empowered and emboldened by the notion that I could be the one thing for others that I had so desperately craved in my youth.”¹⁴ In the years after coming out, Harrison has performed incredibly well, winning two titles at the 2022 Australian Championship. By competing at the 2024 Paris Olympics, Harrison will make history as the first out gay Olympic sport rock climber.

¹³ Alex Reimer, “Champion Rock Climber Campbell Harrison Reflects on Coming Out Two Years Ago & Realizing His Dreams,” *Queerty*, June 14, 2023.

¹⁴ Reimer, “Champion Rock Climber Campbell Harrison Reflects.”

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH



Daniel Jervis of Great Britain looks on after competing in the men’s 1500m heats of the Manchester International Swimming Meet in 2021. Source: Clive Rose via Getty Images.

DANIEL JERVIS (he/him) is an openly gay swimmer who will once again compete for Great Britain at the 2024 Paris Olympics. He chose to come out in 2022 ahead of the Commonwealth Games. He had previously won silver and bronze medals in the 1500m freestyle in 2018 and 2014, respectively, during the Commonwealth Games. He wanted to come out to make a statement, for him “to be [visible] on that stage and to inspire people.”¹⁵ In a 2023 interview, Jervis told *Attitude* that being Christian was the most important thing for him.¹⁶ While discussing faith he remarked: “I think there has always been this thing where you can’t be Christian and be gay.

Well, I’m living proof you can be both and I love to promote that.”¹⁷ When Jervis competed in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, he was not openly gay; but now, as he returns to the world stage for the 2024 Paris Games, he is “going to love the fact that being gay will be a big part of [his performance].”¹⁸

¹⁵ [Cyd Zeigler, “Olympic Swimmer Dan Jervis Comes Out, Wants to Be Visible Gay Athlete at the Commonwealth Games,” *Outsports*, June 29, 2022.](#)

¹⁶ [Alastair James, “Team GB’s Dan Jervis on Being Gay and a Christian: ‘You Can Be Both,’” *Attitude*, February 23, 2023.](#)

¹⁷ James, “Team GB’s Dan Jervis on Being Gay and a Christian.”

¹⁸ [Jon Holmes, “Out Gay Swimmer Dan Jervis Qualifies for Paris 2024 Olympics, with Partner Watching On,” *Outsports*, April 6, 2024.](#)

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH



Single sculls gold medal winner Emma Twigg poses during a welcome home ceremony for New Zealand's 2020 Tokyo Olympic team. Source: Kai Schwoerer via Getty Images.

EMMA TWIGG (she/her) is a rower from New Zealand who has medaled several times throughout her career, including winning the gold medal in single sculls at the 2014 World Championship in Amsterdam. In total, Twigg has qualified for 5 Olympic Games. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics were significant for multiple reasons: it was her first time competing as an out athlete, and she had won her first Olympic gold medal in women's single scull. Recognizing the power of her own platform, Twigg now views sports as an opportunity to effect positive change. In a 2020 interview with *Outsports* she said, "If by reading my story someone feels more confident, then that's a great thing . . . even if it just helps one young kid or aspiring athlete that is struggling with their sexuality."¹⁹

¹⁹ Dawn Ennis, "Gay Olympic Rower Aims to Fight Injustice: 'Sport Is a Vehicle to Shine a Light,'" *Outsports*, July 24, 2020.

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH



Kadeisha Buchanan of Team Canada dribbles the ball during a friendly match against South Korea in 2022. Source: Vaughn Ridley via Getty Images.

KADEISHA BUCHANAN (she/her) will return as a center back for the Canadian women's soccer team in the 2024 Paris Olympics. As a professional footballer, she has received numerous accolades, including winning the Canadian Player of the Year award in 2015, 2017, and 2020, as well as the FIFA Young Player Award at the 2015 Women's World Cup.²⁰ At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Buchanan and others helped make history as the first Canadian women's football team to win an Olympic gold medal. As the defending champions, the gold medal-winning Canadian women's soccer team will be looking to her for experience and leadership as this will mark her third appearance at the Olympic Games.

²⁰ Delroy Davidson, "Buchanan Leads Team Canada's Soccer Team to 2024 Olympics," Humber News, October 12, 2023.

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH



Gold medalist Quinn of Team Canada poses with their medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Source: Naomi Baker via Getty Images.

QUINN (they/them) is a Canadian professional soccer player who plays midfield on Canada Soccer's Women's National Team. At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, they made history as the first-ever trans and nonbinary gold medalist. In September 2020, they took to X (formerly Twitter) to express their frustration with reporters, saying, "Nearly every publication, including LGBTQ news sources, has used my deadname while reporting my story."²¹ They asked reporters and media outlets to "do your research, change your headlines, and grow."²² In a 2021 interview on The Trans Sporter Room podcast, Quinn remarked, "One of the reasons I came out was to use my platform and I'm hoping with my voice I can help uplift other trans voices in our community."²³ Two years later, they made history again by becoming the first trans or nonbinary footballer to compete at the FIFA World Cup. Quinn will continue to serve as a role model for young trans and nonbinary athletes by donning their Canadian kit and competing in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

21 Quinn (@TheQuinn5), "Nearly every publication, including LGBTQ news sources, has used my deadname while reporting my story," X (formerly Twitter), September 12, 2020, 5:21 AM.

22 Quinn (@TheQuinn5) "Nearly every publication."

23 Karleigh Webb, "Team Canada's Quinn Makes Olympic History," *Outsports*, July 22, 2021.

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH



Robbie Manson, men's elite single scull rower, during the New Zealand Rowing media day at Lake Karapiro in 2019. Source: Michael Bradley via Getty Images.

ROBBIE MANSON (he/him) is a rower from New Zealand and 4-time Olympic qualifier. During his appearance at the 2016 Rio Olympics, he was one of just 11 out gay or bisexual men competing among more than 6,000 athletes.²⁴ When the 2020 Tokyo Olympics were postponed due to COVID-19, Manson entered retirement. However, with the support of his teammates, Manson is stepping up again to represent New Zealand in the 2024 Paris Olympics. Acknowledging how LGBTQ visibility in sports could have helped him when he was younger, Manson decided to come out publicly to help others in similar circumstances.

²⁴ Jon Holmes, "Robbie Manson Hopes His Path to Paris Olympics Inspires More Gay Athletes," *Outsports*, September 14, 2023.

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH



Sha'Carri Richardson runs and celebrates in the women's 100m semifinal on day 2 of the 2020 US Olympic Track & Field Team Trials at Hayward Field. Source: Patrick Smith via Getty Images.

SHA' CARRI RICHARDSON (she/her) is an American track and field sprinter known for being the fastest woman in the world, an out LGBTQ athlete, and outspoken character. Richardson publicly came out as bisexual in 2015 on X (formerly Twitter).²⁵ Since then, she has become a decorated sprinter. Recently Richardson won two gold medals in the 100m and 4x100m relay at the 2023 World Championships in Budapest. Having missed the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics after failing a test for marijuana, Sha'Carri Richardson is determined to make her mark on the track at this summer's Olympic Games in Paris.

25 Sha'Carri (@tsshacarri). "My family know I'm bi..." X (formerly Twitter). August 24, 2015, 12:04AM

LGBTQ OLYMPIC HOPEFULS TO WATCH



Gold medalist Yulimar Rojas of Team Venezuela celebrates after winning the women's triple jump final of the World Athletics Championships in 2022. Source: Carmen Mandato via Getty Images.

YULIMAR ROJAS (she/her) is a Venezuelan track and field athlete known as la reina del triple salto—queen of the triple jump. In 2022, she set the triple jump world record, jumping 15.74 meters (51.64 feet). In her incredible career, Rojas has won several gold medals, the first of which in Tokyo at the 2020 Olympic Games. Moreover, in 2020, she was named World Athletics Female Athlete of the year, making her the first Venezuelan to receive the honor.²⁶ On and off the track, Rojas is a champion of LGBTQ rights in Venezuela. In a 2020 interview with *El País*, Rojas stated, “My orientation, my sexuality has always been important to me and to my career. Since I have started sports, I have always tried to fight for the ideologies and rights of women and the LGBT community.”²⁷ As an out lesbian, Rojas is a role model and guiding light for the LGBTQ community.

²⁶ “Duplantis and Rojas Named World Athletes of the Year.” *World Athletics*, December 5, 2020.

²⁷ Carlos Arribas, “Yulimar Rojas: ‘Que mi nombre retumbe en todo el mundo,’” *El País*, February 26, 2020.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORY OF LGBTQ ATHLETES AT THE OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS

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

For much of modern Olympic history, many LGBTQ athletes competed in the games while still closeted. Some athletes, such as Greg Louganis and Johnny Weir, waited until their Olympic competitions were concluded 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 Olympics in Berlin. Peltzer was later sent to a Nazi concentration camp.²⁸

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, making him technically the first Olympic athlete to come out. Curry died of AIDS complications in 1994 but spoke openly about the disease in the years prior to his death.²⁹

In 1982, Tom Waddell founded the Gay Games. Waddell had been a decathlete in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games and 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.

The Gay Games have continued since, with the last event held in 2023 concurrently in Hong Kong and Guadalajara, Mexico. The next Gay Games will be held in Valencia, Spain, in 2026.

In 1988, equestrian Robert Dover came out and became the first Olympic athlete to compete as an out gay man.³⁰

BEYOND BORDERS

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE LGBT LEGISLATION

63%

Of Americans believe it is important for the host country to have laws that protect LGBTQ+ community.

62

Countries have jurisdictions that still criminalize LGBT people

Source: MRI Trending Q1 2024, P18+, Human Dignity Trust

In 2012, at least 2 out LGBTQ athletes competed in the Paralympics: Great Britain's Claire Harvey (Track & Field) and Lee Pearson (equestrian). At least 12 out LGBTQ athletes competed in the 2016 Rio Paralympics.³¹

In 2014, Athlete Ally, GLAAD, and All Out teamed up during the Sochi Winter Games to launch the Principle Six campaign,³² in response to Russia's anti-propaganda law that outlawed expressing support for the LGBTQ community. The campaign successfully lobbied for sexual orientation to be included as a protected class within the anti-discrimination Principle Six of the Olympic Charter.

In 2018, Adam Rippon and Gus Kenworthy became the first out gay American men to compete in the Winter Games.³³



Claire Harvey of Great Britain competes in the women's shot put F55 final during the Morning Session on Day Four of the IPC Athletics World Championships in October 2015.
Source: Francois Ne/ via Getty Images.

28 Tim Pears, "Otto the Strange: The Champion Who Defied the Nazis," *The Guardian*, June 28, 2008

29 "1976: John Curry Skates to Olympic Gold," BBC: On This Day, February 11, 1976.

30 Zoe Saylor, "A Brief History of Openly Gay Olympians," *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 9, 2018

31 "At Least 12 Out LGBTQ Athletes Competing at the Paralympics in Rio," *Outsports*, September 6, 2016

32 Nick Zaccardi, "Olympians Join Athlete Ally, All Out in Support of Gay Rights in Sochi," *NBC Sports*, October 11, 2013

33 Mario Pasquini, "Adam Rippon and Gus Kenworthy Talk Competing as Openly Gay Olympians: 'It's Just Us Existing,'" *People*, February 23, 2018



Laurel Hubbard of New Zealand competes in the women's weightlifting +90kg final during the 2018 Commonwealth Games in the Golden Coast. Source: Scott Barbour via Getty Images.

In 2021, New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard became the first out transgender athlete to qualify for Olympic competition, followed by Canadian soccer player Quinn, who also became the first out transgender Olympic medalist.³⁴ American BMX freestyle athlete Chelsea Wolfe qualified as an alternate for Team USA,³⁵ 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 a 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.³⁶

³⁴ "Olympics: NZ Weightlifter Hubbard to Become First Transgender Athlete to Compete at Games," Reuters, June 22, 2021.

³⁵ Maggie Baska, "Trailblazing Trans BMX Rider Chelsea Wolfe Is Officially Going to the Tokyo Olympics," PinkNews, June 18, 2021.

³⁶ Cyd Zeigler, "Olympic Swimmer Dan Jervis Comes Out, Wants to Be Visible Gay Athlete at the Commonwealth Games," Outsports, June 29, 2022.

CHAPTER 5

BEST PRACTICES FOR REPORTING ON TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY ATHLETES

Transgender people have been participating in sports for years. It is important to remember that everyone—including trans athletes at all levels—deserves equal access to, and participation in, sports. Much media focus has been predominantly on transgender athletes, which is why it is addressed here, but nonbinary athletes are competing at the highest levels of sport, including the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

It is critical that the 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 almost 20 years of Olympic policy. Since 2004, there have been over 54,000 Olympians and Paralympians but 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. A recent study commissioned by the IOC and carried out by the University of Brighton show that athletes who are trans women are at a relative disadvantage in various key physical areas. Specifically, the transgender women’s cardiovascular fitness is lower than cisgender men and cisgender women.³⁷ These results disprove much of the transphobic rhetoric that anti-trans activists use to promote their discriminatory agendas. While sport-specific investigations are needed to inform policy decisions, this initial study should caution the sports’ regulatory bodies against banning transgender athletes from competing.

Incidentally, the 2024 games are occurring during a period of tremendous attacks against transgender athletes’ participation in sports in dozens of US states and in countries across the world including the United Kingdom 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 sports is about far more than simply the ability to play or participate; it is an overall expression of fundamental equality. **As a journalist, you have a critical role to play in informing the public about trans people who are athletes as well as contributing members of their teams and societies.**

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, are not yet old enough to change their name legally, or have difficulty navigating the complex legal process.

Always use current name and gender in historical references

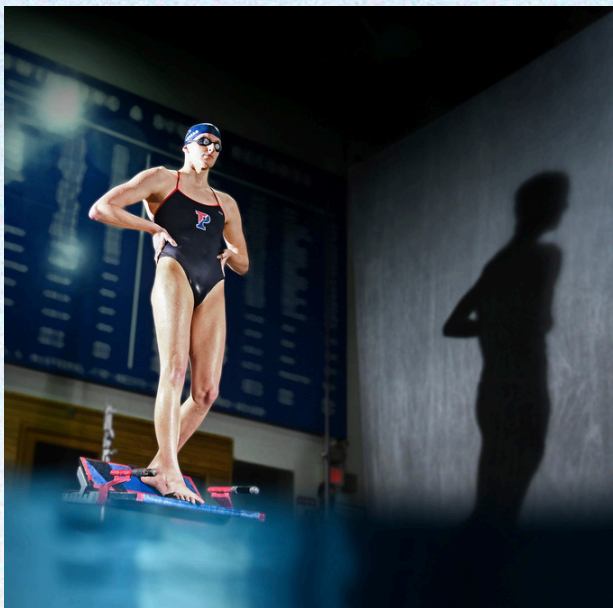
In cases where a trans or nonbinary athlete had a career under a previous name, use their current name to refer to past events—even if those events were categorically gendered. For example: “Elliot Page is an award-winning actor; he was nominated in the Best Actress category for the 2007 film Juno.”

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."



Portrait of Pennsylvania swimmer Lia Thomas posing during photo shoot. Thomas, who is transgender, has been at the center of a debate requirements for trans women to compete in sports. Source: Donald Miralle/Sports Illustrated via Getty Images

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."
- **Postoperative/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 do not. 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 health-care treatments.

CHAPTER 6

OLYMPIC POLICIES ON TRANSGENDER ATHLETES

On November 16, 2021, the IOC released their Framework on Fairness, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations.³⁸ The framework offers guidance to sport's governing bodies on how to draft and implement eligibility criteria that uphold the right of all athletes—regardless of gender identity, expression, and/or sex characteristics—to participate in sports freely, without fear of discrimination. The framework outlines 10 guiding principles centered on inclusion, prevention of harm, and non-discrimination, highlighting the IOC's intentional shift toward a rights-based approach as outlined in March 2020. The framework underscores that no athlete should be banned from competing based on an “alleged” or “unverified” advantage, and emphasizes that sport's 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 collaboratively through consultations with Athlete Ally and more than 250 athletes and stakeholders, including medical and legal professionals and human rights advocates. It will be followed up with resources such as webinars and presentations.

Even though this framework has only been released recently, transgender athletes have always participated in sports. The IOC has been working to explicitly include trans people in sports since the early 2000s. At the 2003 Stockholm Consensus on Sex Reassignment in Sports convened by the IOC, new guidelines were developed for transgender athletes, with 3 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 2 years.³⁹

In 2004, the IOC allowed transgender athletes to participate in the Olympics and Paralympics under these guidelines (however, no athletes qualified until Laurel Hubbard did so in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics).⁴⁰

In 2015, the IOC adopted new guidelines⁴¹ that 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 was consistently below a certain level for at least 1 year before their first competition.⁴² These guidelines were in place for the 2016 Rio Olympics; however, no openly transgender athletes competed.

The 2020 Tokyo Games saw the first out transgender athletes competing. Any transgender athlete who qualified met the guidelines listed above. During the Tokyo Games, IOC medical and science director Richard Budgett admitted that the guidelines created in 2015 were not up to par with the current science and discussions on inclusion.⁴³ Budgett announced that a new framework would be released that would cover 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 chapter.

Though the IOC Framework is presented as a principled framework for sports federations, just as with previous IOC guidelines, international federations (IFs) determine their own policies for participation. With anti-transgender sentiment increasing globally, we have seen more IFs move to implement discriminatory policies.

38 “IOC Framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination.”

39 “IOC Approves Consensus with Regard to Athletes Who Have Changed Sex.” *Olympics.com*, May 16, 2004.

40 Cyd Zeigler, “Moment #22: International Olympic Committee Allows Transgender Athletes to Compete.” *Outsports*, September 12, 2011.

41 “Olympic Documents.” *Olympics.com*, accessed April 26, 2023.

42 International Olympic Committee, “Olympic Documents.”

43 Sean Ingle, “IOC Admits Guidelines for Transgender Athletes Are Not Fit for Purpose.” *The Guardian*, July 30, 2021.

At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Laurel Hubbard became the first out transgender athlete to compete. She did not dominate the sport, as she was eliminated early in the competition. Due to changes in the International Weightlifting Federation’s guidelines, she is ineligible to compete in the 2024 Olympics.⁴⁴ As of August 2023, four international sports federations have barred trans women from participating in women’s sports in the Olympics. World Aquatics, formerly known as FINA, adopted a policy that only permits swimmers who transitioned before the age of 12 to compete in women’s events. Such eligibility restrictions have also been enacted by the International Cycling Union (UCI) and World Athletics. In countries such as the United States, the new eligibility criteria essentially ban transgender women from competing in women’s sports given that in most states it can be difficult to receive gender-affirming care, let alone receive care prior to and during adolescence.

Intersex athletes have also always existed and competed in sports, with one of the earliest known instances being the Polish track athlete Stanisława Walasiewicz. Recently, intersex athletes have been threatened due to the discriminatory policies implemented by international sports federations.



Maximila Imali of Kenya looks on prior to the women’s 400m final during the 2018 Commonwealth Games at the Gold Coast. Source: Matt King via Getty Images.

For instance, World Athletics, track and field’s governing body, has imposed restrictions preventing intersex athletes from competing in women’s events. In Kenya, top sprinter Maximila Imali is ineligible for the 2024 Paris Olympics due to these restrictions. While men such as Michael Phelps are praised for being physically different from their competitors and exalted for winning championships, intersex athletes have their careers destroyed or are forced to spend years in litigation combating discrimination.

RISING DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-TRANS HATE IN SPORTS

Sports remain one of the greatest socialization mechanisms in the world—they communicate values without relying on any one language, and the most successful participants are known and respected globally. Participation in sports also has powerful mental and physical health benefits. Research from The Trevor Project shows that LGBTQ youth who participate in sports earn higher grades and have lower rates of depression and alcohol use.⁴⁶ And yet, an entire community of people remain systematically excluded from sports. For example, research from Human Rights Campaign found that LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to drop out of sports as their peers, and that 80% or more of LGBTQ youth are not out to their coaches.⁴⁷ An Out on the Fields study found that **84% of participants have witnessed or experienced homophobia in sports.**⁴⁸

An Outsport Survey conducted in 2020 indicates that 82% of lesbian women who had experienced negative events in the past year had been verbally insulted in their sports, while 36% had experienced verbal threats.⁴⁹ For many LGBTQ women in sports, the discrimination and hate speech they face negatively affects their willingness to come out. In Romania, the nongovernmental organization Identity Education reported that LGBTQ women usually hide their sexual orientation from the team “as this sometimes influences the decision if they are drafted for a team or not.”⁵⁰ The results relating to transgender athletes are even more alarming. According to a 2019 Outsport Survey, 45% of trans people have stopped participating in sports because they felt uncomfortable due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. For trans women in particular, 46% have had negative experiences in sports, with more than 50% having experienced physical aggression or violence.⁵¹

Anti-trans discrimination in sports can even impact young cisgender children at the K–12 level. In 2022, a student athlete at a high school in Utah had her gender investigated by officials after she won a state-level competition. The investigation began after the parents of the second- and third-place finishers filed a complaint questioning the winner’s gender identity.⁵² More recently, in February 2024, a teenage girl in Utah had to seek police protection after a member of the Utah State Board of Education suggested that she could be transgender, which she is not.⁵³

In April 2024, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), a collegiate athletic association independent from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), announced that it is banning trans women from competing in women’s sports.⁵⁴ In response, more than 400 current and former NCAA professional, Olympic, and Paralympic athletes have called on the NCAA Board of Governors they wrote, “To deny transgender athletes the fundamental right to be who they are, to access the sport they love, and to receive the proven mental and physical health benefits of sport goes against the very principles of the NCAA’s Constitution.”⁵⁵ Olympic gold medalists Megan Rapinoe (US Women’s National Soccer Team) and Sue Bird (US Women’s National Basketball Team) were among those who signed the letter.

One of the most powerful interventions to counter anti-LGBTQ discrimination in sports is education about 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%.**⁵⁶

46 The Trevor Project, “The Trevor Project Research Brief: The Well-Being of LGBTQ Youth Athletes,” August 2020.

47 Play to Win: Improving the Lives of LGBTQ Youth in Sports | Human Rights Campaign, June 20, 2018.

48 Erik Darnison and Alistair Kitchen, “Out on the Fields: The First International Study on Homophobia in Sport | Bingham Cup 2014 and Sydney Convicts, 2013.”

49 ILGA-Europe, “a Euro-Central-Asian Lesbian* Community (EL* C), IGEU, Organisation Intersex International Europe (OI Europe), and European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF), LGBT Women in Sport: Violence, Discrimination, & Lived Experiences (August 2021).”

50 ILGA-Europe et al., LGBT Women in Sport.

51 ILGA-Europe et al., LGBT Women in Sport.

52 Zoe Christen Jones, “Utah Investigates Winning Student Athlete’s Gender after Parents of Second- and Third-Place Finishers Submit Complaints,” CBS News, August 18, 2022.

53 Frankie de la Cretoz, “Opinion: Anti-Trans Policies Put Cisgender Girls in Danger, Too,” CNN, February 15, 2024.

54 Lucia Suarez Sano, “NAIA, Small Colleges Association, Announces Ban on Trans Athletes from Women’s Sports,” CBS News, April 8, 2024.

55 Abhainn Connolly et al., “Letter to the National Collegiate Athletics Association,” Athlete Ally, April 23, 2024.

56 “Accepting Adults Reduce Suicide Attempts Among LGBTQ Youth,” The Trevor Project, June 27, 2019.

GLOBAL SCALE INFLUENCING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

40%

According to MRI-Simmons, more than 40% of Americans say that "seeing LGBTQ Olympians make[s] them interested in local policies concerning LGBTQ athletes."

Source: MRI Trending Q1 2024, P18+

In the United States, state legislatures have continued their attack on the LGBTQ community. As of April 9, 2024, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is tracking at least 480 anti-LGBTQ bills that were introduced in state legislatures. Of those that are currently circulating, 48 seek to ban transgender youth from competing in sports.⁵⁷

The 2023 legislative session had a record number of anti-LGBTQ laws introduced in state legislatures. According to the ACLU, 492 bills were proposed, half of which sought to diminish LGBTQ rights and representation within schools and the education industry. As of August, 78 of these bills have been approved by their respective state governors.⁵⁸

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 undergo mandatory sex testing. 2 Namibian elite women's track athletes, Christine Mboma and Beatrice Masilingi, were banned in July 2023 from running the 400m 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 about elite women athletes: if a woman is too fast or too strong, then she must not actually be a woman.⁵⁹ Namibia's National Olympic Committee said in a statement that neither athlete was aware that they had heightened levels of naturally occurring testosterone.

In June 2021, South African gold medalist Caster Semenya also failed to qualify due to naturally occurring high levels of testosterone;⁶⁰ 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 2 court cases at the European Court of Human Rights.⁶¹

Though women athletes with intersex variations face distinct and different issues from those faced by transgender women athletes, all women are affected 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.⁶²

57 "Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures in 2024," American Civil Liberties Union

58 "Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights."

59 Gerald Imray, "Namibia Teenagers out of Olympic 400m over High Natural Testosterone Levels," CBC Sports, July 2, 2021.

60 Michael Shapiro, "Namibia Runners Ineligible Due to Testosterone Rules," Sports Illustrated, July 2, 2021.

61 Associated Press, "Caster Semenya Fails to Reach Olympic Qualifying Time for 5,000 Meters at Race in Belgium," ESPN, June 30, 2021.

62 Monica Hesse, "We Celebrated Michael Phelps's Genetic Differences. Why Punish Caster Semenya for Hers?," Washington Post, May 3, 2019.

CHAPTER 8

ANTI-TRANSGENDER ACTIVISTS AND MEDIA MISINFORMATION

In the United States, 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 and 2018, these activist groups focused on trying to prevent trans youth from accessing restrooms and locker rooms at school. Anti-LGBTQ organizations have 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 through 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 avoid recirculating anti-trans rhetoric. The surge in transphobia surrounding sports over the past year did not occur in 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 especially scrutinize statements and spokespeople representing the following organizations, understanding that this current campaign is a continuation of anti-transgender (and broader anti-LGBTQ) animus.

Alliance Defending Freedom

Designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) is an enormous law firm with deep pockets. ADF has recruited cisgender female athletes to join its lawsuits, filed 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.

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 United Kingdom's Gender Recognition Act that would make the process of name changes easier for trans people.

Family Policy Alliance

An offshoot of Focus on the Family, Family Policy Alliance is linked to state chapters around the United States 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 (specifically in Idaho) on its website.⁶³

⁶³ "Girls Deserve Fair Play," Family Policy Alliance, accessed April 26, 2023.

Heritage Foundation

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

Promise to America's Children

Launched by a coalition of long-standing anti-LGBTQ activist groups in early 2021, Promise to America's Children is a campaign to eradicate gender-affirming healthcare for transgender youth, ban trans youth from sports, and prevent trans equality in schools. It offers model legislation to state lawmakers, promoting legislation that refers to healthcare for transgender youth as "dangerous medical experimentation."⁶⁴

LGBTQ ATHLETES PRIDE OF THE NATION

58%

Of Americans believe that LGBTQ athletes are a good representation of their country.

Source: MRI Trending Q1 2024, P18+



A person holds a sign in opposition to a policy that the Chino Valley school board is meeting to vote on which would require school staff to "out" students to their parents if they ask to be identified by a gender that is not listed on their birth certificate on July 20, 2023 in Chino, California. Source: David McNew via Getty Images

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 training for, qualifying for, and competing in women's sports. 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

This group was 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 over their cisgender peers—a claim that is at odds with science and with evidence in real-world competition.

⁶⁴ "For Policy Makers," Promise to America's Children, accessed January 30, 2021.

CHAPTER 9 FRENCH LGBTQ CONTEXT

France has a long and rich history of LGBTQ activism, characterized by both significant progress and challenges. In 1791, France became the first country to decriminalize same-sex relationships after the French Revolution. Paris thereafter became a beacon of queer culture, a place that LGBTQ people would go to throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Though Paris was more welcoming compared with other major cities in Europe, LGBTQ people faced discrimination in France as it was discouraged to be open about one's sexuality or gender identity.

Though France is by far one of the more progressive countries in terms of enacting pro-LGBTQ policies, there is more work to be done. France does not recognize "nonbinary" as a gender. While there is a third legal gender option known as "neutral gender," it only applies to those who are intersex.⁶⁵ Additionally, while one can easily change their name by going to the town hall, a person who wants to change their gender on the civil registry has to go through an often expensive legal process, supplying testimonials and other official documents. According to French sociologist Emmanuel Bobatti, accessing medical support for trans people is also an arduous process, as people have to undergo a 2-year psychiatric evaluation to access gender-affirming health care.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, France has made immense advancements in LGBTQ rights and quality of life in the last several decades.

1999 In November 1999, the French parliament established Civil Solidarity Pacts (PACS), allowing couples, same-sex or otherwise, to enter a legal domestic partnership that afforded most but not all of the legal rights and protections offered by marriage.⁶⁷ PACS established certain rights and obligations, such as jointly filing income taxes, inheritance, social welfare, and so on.⁶⁸ However, the right to adopt a child and to use artificial insemination were denied to PACS partners, thus making it near impossible for LGBTQ couples to expand their families.

2010 In 2010, France became the first country to remove being transgender from the list of mental illnesses in its national clinical classification. Moreover, since 2017, France no longer imposes medical requirements on those who wish to change their gender on the civil registry.

2013 In May 2013, France became the 14th country to legalize same-sex marriage.⁷⁰ The law passed under President François Hollande, who additionally lifted restrictions specific to trans individuals wanting to get married and equalized adoption rights for LGBTQ couples and opposite-sex couples.⁷¹ A few weeks after the law was passed, Vincent Austin and Bruno Boileau became the first gay couple to wed in France.⁷²

2021 In 2021 France passed a bioethics law that gave single women and lesbian couples the right to medically assisted reproduction such as the freezing of eggs.⁷³

2022 In 2022 the French government criminalized conversion therapy.⁷⁴ France's equality and diversity minister, Élisabeth Moreno, called the practice "barbaric," citing how it "very often leaves permanent marks on bodies and minds" of victims. Any person charged could face up to 2 years in jail and a fine of up to 30,000 euros. The penalty is higher if it is found that the convicted was targeting minors.

2023 "Games wide open" was selected as the slogan for the 2024 Paris Olympics, demonstrating a clear commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. Highlighting its support for the members of the LGBTQ community, on May 17, 2023, the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia, the Paris 2024 emblem was altered to include the colors of the pride flag. Additionally, organizations such as Fier-Play Association are partnering with the organizing committee to establish Pride Houses close to the competition venues. The Pride House is a "safe, identifiable, and welcoming space for everyone," created with the goal of celebrating LGBTQ athletes and promoting their visibility throughout the games.⁷⁵

65 Christina Cauterucci, "France's New Third Gender Is Just as Narrow as the First Two," *Slate*, October 15, 2015.
66 France 24, "France in Focus - Nadia Cherbil, Joanna Cockerell, Stéphanie Cheval, and Sonia Barilello, 'The Ongoing Fight for Transgender Rights in France,'" *France 24*, February 3, 2021.
67 Patrick Fasty, "The 'Civil Solidarity Pact' (PACS) in France: An Impossible Evaluation," *Population & Societies* 369 (June 2001).
68 "Civil Solidarity Pact," INED (Institut national d'études démographiques), accessed April 26, 2023.

69 *Over the Rainbow? The Road to LGBTI Inclusion* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020).
70 Christian Fraser, "Same-Sex Marriage: France Changes Law," *BBC News*, April 23, 2013.
71 *Stonewall Global Workplace Briefings: France* (London: Stonewall, 2018).
72 "First Gay Couple Wed in France amid Tight Security," *BBC News*, May 29, 2013.
73 "Loi du 2 août 2021 relative à la bioéthique," *République Française*, September 29, 2021.
74 "LGBT Rights: New French Law to Criminalise 'Conversion Therapy,'" *BBC*, January 26, 2022.
75 "Paris 2024 Announces Pride House," *Olympics.com*, accessed April 26, 2023.

CHAPTER 10

FRENCH LGBTQ ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Association of LGBTI Journalists ⁷⁶

Founded in 2013, the Association of LGBTI Journalists (AJL) works toward delivering quality and accurate media coverage of LGBTQ-related topics and issues. The organization brings journalists from various backgrounds together to provide others with educational resources and media intervention and contribute to the visibility of LGBTQ people in France.

Fédération Sportive LGBT+ ⁷⁷

In the 1980s, LGBTQ sports clubs emerged to challenge the negative heteronormative atmosphere typical in sports and to provide a safe place for LGBTQ people.⁷⁸ In 1986, 5 Parisian athletes founded the Comité Gay Paris Île-de-France (CGPIF), which advocated for LGBTQ inclusion in sports, helped create the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF), and became an umbrella organization for LGBTQ sports clubs. The CGPIF today is known as Fédération Sportive LGBT+ and continues to lead the LGBTQ sports movement in France and Europe. The federation represents more than 50 sports clubs and more than 6,000 athletes.

Inter-LGBT ⁷⁹

Since 1999, Inter-LGBT has advocated for increased visibility of the LGBTQ community and actively fights against discrimination. The umbrella organization represents 50 local and regional groups. It also organizes annual pride marches and events where allies and community members can join in a safe space.

Le Refuge ⁸⁰

Le Refuge supports LGBTQ youth, ages 14 to 25, by providing temporary housing, educational resources, and psychological support. Since its inception in 2003, the organization has supported more than 9,000 LGBTQ youth, guiding many toward autonomy. Le Refuge additionally connects French youth with legal assistance and provides food and financial aid, in addition to many other areas of support.

Pride House Paris 2024 ⁸¹

Pride House will once again provide a safe environment in the 2024 Olympics, where LGBTQ athletes, spectators, and allies can congregate to celebrate the Olympics and its incredible LGBTQ competitors. The Pride House will be located at the Rosa Bonheur sur Seine, a boat in the heart of Paris near the Eiffel Tower and other major tourist attractions. This aligns with the Paris 2024 slogan, “games wide open,” and their commitment to making the Olympics accessible for everyone.

SOS Homophobie ⁸²

SOS Homophobie is a national organization that provides support to those who experience discrimination, in addition to offering information, hosting educational events, and maintaining an anonymous hotline.

⁷⁶ See <https://www.aiglbti.info>.

⁷⁷ See the website of Fédération Sportive LGBT+.

⁷⁸ Mathilde Huillard and Ilse Hartmann-Tews, *LGBTQ-Related Sports Policies and the Experiences of LGBTQ Individuals in Sports in France* (London: Routledge, 2022).

⁷⁹ See <https://www.inter-lgbt.org>.

⁸⁰ See <https://aider.le-refuge.org>.

⁸¹ See <https://pridehousefrance.com/en/home>.

⁸² See <https://www.sos-homophobie.org>.

CHAPTER 11

LGBTQ ATHLETES IN FRANCE

Amandine Buchard represented France in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, winning a silver medal in the half lightweight judo event and a gold medal in the mixed team event.⁸³ She came out publicly along with 5 other elite-level French athletes in June 2021. Buchard told her story in the documentary *We Need to Talk*, which featured 2 other Olympic athletes: fencer Astrid Guyart and basketball player Céline Dumerc. After her incredible performance in Tokyo, Buchard wrote in a celebratory Facebook post that she was preparing for the Paris Olympics.⁸⁴ Both Dumerc and Guyart retired after competing in the Tokyo Olympics.

Halba Diouf is a trans woman and a Senegalese French sprinter training for the 200m race in preparation for the 2024 Olympics.⁸⁵

However, the World Athletics Association lowered the maximum amount of plasma testosterone women athletes can have to be allowed to compete. This restriction has wrongfully barred athletes like Diouf from representing their countries in the sports to which they have dedicated an immense amount of time and energy. World Athletics' policies in the past have not only excluded trans athletes from competing but have discriminated against women of color who were assigned female at birth. Caster Semenya, the South African runner, was not allowed to compete due to her testosterone levels.⁸⁶ Consequently, she filed and won a discrimination lawsuit against World Athletics. Despite this, the federation continues to uphold these regulations and introduce stricter rules that govern who can and cannot compete.



France's Amandine Buchard celebrates her victory over Kosovo's Distria Krasniqi at the end of their women's - 52 kg category final bout at the Paris Grand Slam judo tournament in Paris on February 5, 2022. Source: Sameer Al-DOUMY / AFP via Getty Images

83 Romain Huezix, "A Day-to-Day Breakdown of the Paris 2024 Olympics," *France* 24 July 19, 2023.

84 Alex Reimer, "Out Judo Star Amandine Buchard Wins Silver Medal 1 Month after Publicly Coming Out," *Outsports*.

85 Noemie Olive, "We're Being Hounded": French Transgender Sprinter Decries Olympics Ban," *Reuters*, May 10, 2023.

86 James Factora, "Caster Semenya Wins Discrimination Lawsuit Over Her Testosterone Levels," *them*, July 13, 2023.

EXPERT ORGANIZATIONS FOR JOURNALISTS



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 intersections of sports and LGBTQI+ equality, Athlete Ally works to end the structural and systemic oppression that isolates, excludes, and endangers LGBTQI+ people in sports. They educate individuals and institutions to understand obstacles to inclusion for LGBTQI+ people and how they can build an inclusive culture within their athletic communities. They work to ensure sport governing bodies, teams, and leagues adopt policies that reflect the diversity of their constituents. They incubate athlete activism to advance LGBTQI+ equality in and through sport. For more information, visit their website: www.athleteally.org or follow them on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), or Instagram.

www.athleteally.org

Contact: joanna.hoffman@athleteally.org



FIER & Fier-Play

Fier-Play is the leading partner for the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics Pride House. Fier-Play is an offshoot of FIER (Fondation Inclusion pour un Environment Respectueux) which was founded in 2015 to help fund the 10th annual Gay Games in Paris in 2018. Since then, the nonprofit has expanded its work to facilitate funding for projects that accelerate the acceptance of the LGBTQ community in France. Fier-Play's mission is "to act for fair-play, inclusion, equality and respect of people in sport regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity." This year, Fier-Play is partnering with the organizing committee to establish a Pride House close to the competition venues. For more information, visit their website and follow updates via their social media on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

www.fondationfier.fr/



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 X (formerly [Twitter](#)).

www.glaad.org

Contact: press@glaad.org



Pride House
PARIS 2024



ATHLETE
ALLY