

Pride Research Roundup 2022

Introduction

To celebrate Pride 2022, our Research team at Athlete Ally has put together our second annual Research Roundup, a list of our favorite research readings and listenings on LGBTQ+ topics in sport. From a comprehensive review of how the International Olympic Committee's newest framework on fairness sets novel precedents while still falling short to a heartwrenching documentary on transgender (trans) youth athletes, this list includes what we consider to be the best synopses of the state of the LGBTQI+ movement in sport from June 2021 to June 2022.

News Articles

[Trans Women in Sports is a Fight for Equality \(2022\)](#)

In this article, journalist Mark Segal addresses the nuanced and misinformed debate around trans athletes by focusing on the concept of “advantages.” While some argue that people assigned male at birth have an inherent physical advantage, Segal pushes back, arguing that this prejudiced thinking fails to acknowledge the real “advantages” in sports, like wealth, that have an even greater effect on competition.

[‘I Am Lia’: The Trans Swimmer Dividing America Tells Her Story \(2022\)](#)

Lia Thomas has become one of the most well-known athletes in the country, not only because of her record-breaking collegiate swimming career, but also because of her role as a trans woman on a women's team. In this article, readers learn about Thomas's grueling and beautiful journey navigating physical changes, unwanted publicity, and outpourings of both hatred and love, to ultimately become the true Lia.

[Meet the Openly LGBT Athletes at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, from Asya Miller and Monique Matthews to Laurie Williams \(2021\)](#)

A record number of LGBTQ+ athletes competed in the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. At least 185 Olympians and 30 Paralympians took part – more than three times the number of LGBTQ+ Olympians and double the number of LGBTQ+ Paralympians who participated in the 2016 Games. This article celebrates those LGBTQ+ Paralympians as their whole selves and is one of the few articles to quote and prioritize their voices.



[*Australian Footballer Josh Cavallo Comes Out, Becomes World's Only Active Gay Male Soccer Player \(2021\)*](#)

Australian footballer Josh Cavallo publicly came out as gay on social media last October, making him the only openly gay, active, and male, top-flight professional footballer in the world. The 21-year-old midfielder announced his sexuality in an open letter on Twitter, offering further insight into the ways professional male athletes are able, and not able, to express themselves and their fears around coming out as LGBTQ.

[*4 Top Athletes Barred from Competing in their Olympic Events because their Natural Testosterone Levels are Deemed Too High \(2021\)*](#)

World Athletics' 2018 regulations bar intersex women, who naturally have higher levels of testosterone on average, from competing in any international running event between 400-meters and a mile unless they take medication or have surgery. This article tells the stories of the four black women barred from competing during the Olympic Games this year and outlines how lawyers argue these regulations are a violation of human rights.

[*Tom Daley calls for Olympic Ban on Countries where Being Gay is Punishable by Death \(2021\)*](#)

In October, British Olympic diver Tom Daley called for a ban against countries where homosexuality is punishable by death from competing in the Olympic Games. There are 11 countries where homosexuality is punishable by death and approximately 60 where it is criminalized. Daley also criticized the organizers of the FIFA World Cup for hosting the 2022 competition in Qatar, where the death penalty is a legal possibility.

[*The new Olympic policy that undoes a half-century of bigotry \(2021\)*](#)

Over half-a-century ago, the International Olympic Committee established guidelines to address eligibility in the games based on hormone testing and other practices widely considered offensive and outdated today. These regulations have recently been rewritten by the IOC, but their long lasting harm and biased determinations of womanhood – particularly towards non-white athletes – cannot ever be erased.

Academic Articles

[*Sports, Transgender Rights, and the Bodily Politics of Cisgender Supremacy \(2021\)*](#)

This paper tracks the political shift towards targeting trans athletes since 2020. 110 bills have been introduced that suggest banning trans athletes in girls' sports across the



United States. This analysis argues that Republican lawmakers are pushing legislative proposals which advance a logic of “cisgender supremacy” and target not only policy change but a state-sanctioned return to a narrowly cis- and heteropatriarchal gender order.

[*Student-Athlete Attitudes Toward Gay, Ally, and Anti-LGBT+ Prospective Coaches \(2021\)*](#)

This study explores the attitudes of NCAA athletes toward gay, ally, and anti-LGBT+ coaches. Results revealed athletes rated gay, allied, and nonidentified coaches significantly higher than anti-LGBT+ coaches. Athletes most valued allied coaches for having inclusive philosophies, where homogenous values from anti-LGBT+ coaches and the sexual orientations of gay coaches were viewed as major weaknesses.

[*Female Testosterone: Contested Terrain \(2021\)*](#)

This paper examines the eligibility rules and impact of World Athletics’ policy on intersex athletes. It outlines how women with naturally elevated testosterone are treated as if they are cheating or have an unfair competitive advantage. Examining how race, region, class, and nation intersect to disproportionately affect women athletes from the Global South, the paper considers the mental and physical health of intersex athletes.

Op-Eds

[*The Power of Layshia Clarendon \(2021\)*](#)

This piece from *ESPN* explains why Layshia Clarendon is so much more than a basketball player. Layshia, who uses he/she/and they pronouns, has not only used basketball as a device to explore gender, sexuality, identity, and justice, but has moved the needle for the sport on major issues like LGBTQ+ rights and police brutality. As an athlete, parent, organizer, activist, and trailblazer, Layshia’s impact is boundless.

[*Why I'm Proud to Support Trans Athletes Like Lia Thomas \(2022\)*](#)

In this op-ed from the first out gay silver medalist and one of the first women to swim the 1,500 meter event at the Tokyo Olympics, Erica Sullivan discusses her gratitude in that coming out as gay never kept her from being able to participate in sport. Sullivan argues that all athletes — including trans athletes like her competitor, Lia Thomas — deserve to be respected and included, exactly as they are.



[Who Gets to be Glorious? \(2022\)](#)

Built into almost every anti-trans bill sweeping the nation is a concern that transgender athletes could have inherent biological advantages. But, as former Olympic swimmer Casey Legler questions, aren't biological advantages what makes elite athletes, both cisgender and transgender, so exceptional in the first place? Picking and choosing "who gets to be glorious" is a clear demonstration of prejudice in the athletic world.

[An NCAA Policy On Trans Athletes Shouldn't Take Sport Out of Young Athletes' Lives \(2022\)](#)

As part of Global Sport Matter's "College Sports 2.0" issue, Valerie Moyer traces the shifting NCAA policies on trans athletes, and particularly trans women. Moyer argues that the vague enforcement of these policies, combined with the undue burden they place on individual student athletes may have the effect of keeping would-be prospective trans athletes out of the NCAA entirely.

[Michael Sam Deserved Better, Treated Differently than Carl Nassib \(2021\)](#)

In September 2021, the NFL's Carl Nassib came out as gay and was hailed as the first active openly gay NFL player, which all but erases the history of Michael Sam, writes the *Black Wall Street Times*. Sam's coming-out was not only met with a lack of contract options, but was handled with a level of homophobia and racism that Nassib, a white man, would never receive. Per the *Times*, Michael Sam deserved better.

Podcasts

[Burn It All Down \(Ongoing\)](#)

[Episode 231: The Best, Worst, and Lackluster of DEI Initiatives in Sport \(2021\)](#)

In this episode, Lindsay Gibbs, Shireen Ahmed, and Brenda Elsey discuss the latest in DEI initiatives in sports. They discuss the FIFPRO report detailing players' perspectives on discrimination in the sport of soccer, the Rooney Rule which requires hiring diversity in NFL coaching staff to increase diversity in coaching, the ways diversity can be misrepresented in reporting, as well as player's efforts to push for change.



[Interview: Julie Kliegman, Chief Copy Editor at Sports Illustrated, on Trans Athletes in the NCAA \(2022\)](#)

In this episode, Lindsay Gibbs interviews Julie Kliegman, Chief Copy Editor at *Sports Illustrated* about how the University of Pennsylvania athlete Lia Thomas's success and subsequent headlines have coincided with swift, regressive policy decisions by the NCAA. Equal parts myth-busting and play-by-play of the flurry of confusing policies at the collegiate level, this episode slows things down and combs through the details.

[Hot Take: Trans Triathlete Chris Mosier on the Importance of Trans Inclusion In Sport \(2022\)](#)

Shireen Ahmed talks with Chris Mosier, the trailblazing race-walker and activist, about the harm done by banning trans athletes, especially kids. These attacks move from sports to gender affirming healthcare, and are part of efforts to stoke support from conservative voter bases. The importance of self-care, hope, and joy-as-resistance is central to the discussion, and Ahmed and Mosier also share their favorite self-care practices.

[*The End of Sport \(Ongoing\)*](#)

[Episode 70: Gender Expansive Gymnastics with Half In, Half Out \(2021\)](#)

Dr. Johanna Mellis and Dr. Georgia Cervin interview Blake and Kino, founders and co-hosts of *Half In, Half Out*, the only LGBTQ+ focused gymnastics podcast. The conversation focuses on exclusionary trans eligibility policies, the policing of masculinity and femininity in different kinds of gymnastics, and the ways age plays a role in gymnastics athletes' coming out processes within the sport.

[Episode 71: On Trans and Non-Binary Sporting Inclusion with Verity Smith and Abby Barras \(2021\)](#)

Dr. Johanna Mellis interviews diversity and inclusion leader for International Gay Rugby, Verity Smith, and scholar of trans- and nonbinary sporting inclusion, Abby Barras. Barras's research sheds light on the experiences of trans and non-binary athletes in accessing sports. Smith details the anti-trans stance in rugby, his experiences, and his work with Mermaids, an organization supporting gender diverse kids in the UK.



Infographics, Newsletters, and Social Media Content

[Checklist for Creating an Inclusive and Welcoming AT Facility](#)

This infographic, one of many outstanding resources created and shared by the National Athletic Trainers Association's LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee, outlines key steps that can be taken to make an athletic training facility and any sport facility more inclusive. The infographic includes information on providing care for LGBTQ+ patients seeking treatment through intake forms, facilities, language, and staff training.

[The GIST \(Ongoing\)](#)

The GIST is a women-founded and operated sports media brand that aims to level the playing field in sports through newsletters, podcasts, and social media posts. Launched across North America in 2019 by Jacie deHoop, Ellen Hyslop and Roslyn McLarty, The GIST looks to change the game in sports media by creating content that focuses equally on men's sports and women's sports through a novel system of sports media.

[Power Plays \(Ongoing\)](#)

Three days a week, Power Plays offers exclusive reporting, one-on-one interviews, history lessons, news commentary, and analysis about the biggest issues surrounding gender in sports. It looks at the structures and decision makers that control the sports market while keeping women and nonbinary people on the margins. It examines the ways racism, classism, homophobia, and transphobia exacerbate that marginalization.

Videos

[Changing the Game \(2021\)](#)

In 2017, Mack Beggs, a trans boy, won a state girls' wrestling championship despite wanting to wrestle in the boys' division. Mack is one of three trans athletes profiled in this documentary, which offers a look at the way trans teens around the country are caught in the fraught world of athletics. This inspiring documentary illustrates how rules differ from state to state, sport to sport, and athlete to athlete.

[ESPN's 144 \(2021\)](#)

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 Women's National Basketball Association season was played entirely in Bradenton, Florida. 144 players across 12 teams spent the summer in a bubble. This documentary is the inside story of what



unfolded over the two-and-a-half-month season, including the voices of players balancing efforts for racial and queer justice with the rigors of playing on the court.

[*A Secret Love \(2020\)*](#)

Falling in love in 1947, two women, Pat Henschel and pro baseball player Terry Donahue, began a 65-year journey of love and overcoming prejudice. Amid shifting times, the two women kept their decades-long love a secret from their families while running an interior decorating business. A heartfelt tribute to queer romance in sport, the documentary demonstrates the challenges and joys of coming out later in life.