



Pride Research Roundup 2023

To celebrate Pride in 2023, the Research division of Athlete Ally has put together our third annual Research Roundup – our favorite readings, viewings, and listenings on LGBTQI+ topics in sport. From a heart wrenching podcast episode on the experiences of semi-professional women’s soccer players straddling the lines of religious acceptance and queer rights to a paradigm shifting academic article on gender inclusivity in sport, this list includes what we consider to be the best pieces on the state of the LGBTQI+ movement in sport from June 2022 to June 2023 and synopses of that work.

News Articles and Op-Eds

[Becky Sauerbrunn: Let Missouri Trans Girls and Women Play \(2023\)](#)

Olympic gold medalist and two-time World Cup champion soccer player Becky Sauerbrunn argues against a transgender athlete ban in Missouri. While her piece is specific to Missouri state legislation, her points hold true across the US. It is a powerful piece from a current, professional woman athlete on the need for inclusion and pushing back against narratives that trans girls threaten women’s sports.

[In a New Nonbinary Category, One Marathoner Finally Feels at Home \(2022\)](#)

Tracking an individual runner’s experience of the Chicago Marathon, this article places a deeply personal experience within the wider expansion toward nonbinary competition categories in sport. Cal Calamia explores his return to his hometown course, argues for ensuring competition is open, and provides practical recommendations for inclusion.

[Jonquel Jones and the Untold Story of the WNBA’s Reigning MVP \(2022\)](#)

This piece oscillates between a detailed look at the life of WNBA star Jonquel Jones and the societal systems that keep her, her league-mates from the wider acclaim they deserve. With over 80% of WNBA players being people of color, the gravity and inconsistency of predominantly white celebrities within the league must be examined. As the market answers to a culture of whiteness, articles like this provide vital context.

[Majority of U.S. Adults Recently Supported Transgender Athletes’ Rights \(2023\)](#)

This article outlines findings from a national study encompassing adults of various ages throughout the U.S. that finds most people support trans athletes’ right to choose their teams for competition, intersex athletes’ right to choose to compete on women’s teams and the idea that gender segregation in youth sports raises issues. Authors posit that this narrative counters the belief that anti-trans ideologies are in the majority.

[NCAA Coaches’ Perceptions of Transgender Athletes Inclusion \(2022\)](#)

As the NCAA and state-level participation policies for transgender athletes continue to



shift, this study examines how coaches feel about trans athletes. NCAA coaches were asked about how they understood fairness, their knowledge of LGBTQI+ topics, and how they would react to coaching a trans athlete. Coaches noted a general concern about the “fairness” of trans women competing, despite wanting to support all athletes.

[*Trans Powerlifter JayCee Cooper Wins Discrimination Suit \(2023\)*](#)

After an ongoing legal battle, JayCee Cooper, a trans woman has won a discrimination suit against USA Powerlifting. Cooper’s determination to compete and take a stand for trans athletes has caught national attention during the past four years of litigation. Her victory has important consequences for sport discrimination lawsuits elsewhere.

[*How Women’s Swimming Got So Transphobic \(2023\)*](#)

Since 2021, Lia Thomas’ role in women’s swimming has been a lightning rod for transphobic vitriol and trans-exclusionary organizing. In this op-ed, journalist Frankie de la Cretaz walks readers through the specific facets of women’s swimming, including its history, to describe how this context for such intense discrimination came to be.

Blog Posts

[*How U.S. Politicians are Using Moral Panics to Sideline Trans Athletes \(2022\)*](#)

In this blog post, scholars discuss media around the 60 bills banning access to sport for trans youth passed in 31 states in 2021. Examining news articles, public statements, and opinion pieces, they conclude that trans athletes were made into a spectacle by conservative lawmakers. This push created a moral panic where politicians were able to present themselves as protectors of women’s sport to engender support from voters.

[*The Problem with Sex Segregated Sport \(2022\)*](#)

Dr. Anima Adjepong and Dr. Travers contend that sex segregated sport is untenable. They argue that even people who believe in women’s equality to men find themselves compelled by the arguments that men are athletically superior and that gender expansive athletes threaten social systems. The authors suggest a need to challenge sex segregation in sport to redress long-standing gender inequality in society.

[*“... there’s no way I was stopping:” Risk and Injury on RuPaul’s Drag Race \(2023\)*](#)

In this piece, Niya St. Amant examines the context of RuPaul’s Drag Race, its cultural meaning, and its competitive environment. St. Amant presents the tension between drag as affirmative self-expression and perpetuating cultural beliefs about the risk of bodily harm in competition. Examples from recent seasons of the show demonstrate the high-stakes of physical competition between drag queens.

Academic Articles and Reviews



[*Transgender Women Athletes and Elite Sport: A Scientific Review \(2022\)*](#)

In 2021, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport commissioned the E-Alliance to review all scientific and grey literature on transgender women's participation in high-level competitive sport. This review of all research published since 2011 encompasses biomedical and sociocultural studies. It recommends making sport inclusive for transgender individuals and providing access to up-to-date research insights.

[*Advancing Feminist Innovation in Sport Studies: A Transdisciplinary Dialogue \(2023\)*](#)

In this open access article, feminist sport and exercise practitioners, sports scientists, and social science researchers discuss some of the most pressing issues in sport today (such as ACL injuries, concussions, menstruation, mental health, gender identities, and gender categorizations). They present significant possibilities for cross-disciplinary innovations and strategies to respond to cultural change in gendered sport.

[*Aquatic Federation's New Eligibility Policy— An Unacceptable Erosion \(2022\)*](#)

Sheree Bekker, a leading voice on “protective” policies in sport, argues that the new policy for the women's category of international swimming erodes medical privacy and bodily autonomy. Bekker points to the similarities between FINA's 2022 policy and sex testing via chromosome screening in women's elite sports. The piece highlights FINA's departure from Olympic guidelines which emphasize non-discrimination and privacy.

[*Gender Inclusive Sport: A Paradigm Shift for Research, Policy, and Practice \(2023\)*](#)

The paradigm shift presented here is moving away from considering inclusion and fairness as separate, contending issues. Instead, inclusion is an opportunity to facilitate participation of all diverse bodies in the world of sport. This is presented as the outcome of new research, learning, and knowledge-development opportunities.

[*Inclusion, Fairness and Non-discrimination in Sport: A Wider Lens \(2022\)*](#)

Considering inclusion and fairness as integral supports of athlete safety and mental health creates a holistic view of non-discrimination. The article overviews the IOC policy's progression and discusses the ten framing elements aimed at ensuring fairness, inclusion, and non-discrimination. The authors center athlete experience, arguing the need to develop policy with athlete dignity as a primary goal.

Podcasts

[*Hustle Rule: The Untold Stories of Women's Soccer Episode 2: Play Away the Gay \(2022\)*](#)

This episode tells the story of a semi-pro team in North Carolina that believes homosexuality is a sin and the effect this belief has on its gay players. Just down the road is another team, owned and coached by gay women and allies who believe you can



love whoever you love. This episode outlines the complexities of the rivalry between, and the history of, these two teams, which runs deeper than you can imagine.

[*Laughter Permitted: Title IX and Transgender Athletes with Katie Barnes \(2023\)*](#)

During the podcast's mini series on Title IX, Katie Barnes walks listeners through the history and current landscape of Title IX as it relates to trans athletes. Barnes has done extensive reporting on this topic, including interviews with trans athletes. This podcast offers a careful overview and a great introduction to how Title IX works in sports.

[*The Reconstructed Man Podcast \(Ongoing\)*](#)

This podcast explores issues of all kinds, including sport, from a trans masculine perspective. Through real, emotional, and hilarious conversations, host, former star athlete, and current basketball coach, Layne Ingram, shares his story and dives deep into the often missed and purposefully ignored stories from the transgender community. He urges listeners to contribute to a Reconstructed and inclusive society.

Videos and Documentaries

[*Category Woman \(2022\)*](#)

When runner Caster Semenya burst onto the stage in 2009, her successes launched an exposition of her medical records and spurred debates on her 'legitimacy' as a woman. Using naturally varying androgen levels, sport institutions created rules forcing certain women to alter their bodies to compete. This documentary focuses on four of those women and the devastation these regulations wreaked on their bodies and lives.

[*In The Wrong Body At The Time \(2023\)*](#)

Layne Ingram, former University of Michigan star and current coach at Lansing Community College, tells his story of coming into his sexuality and gender identity. This video reminds viewers that each person's experience of trans identity is different. Layne identified as lesbian before later coming out as trans. The video shows how both playing and coaching sports are deeply embedded in his identity and life.

[*Stay on Board: The Leo Baker Story \(2023\)*](#)

Stay on Board offers an intimate view into the life of Leo Baker, navigating expectations of femininity placed on him as a teenage skate brand darling. Later, he gears up to compete in the women's category at the debut of skateboarding as an Olympic sport. The film provides a needed glimpse into gendered sponsorship expectations and what happens when an alternative sport becomes institutionalized in the Olympics.