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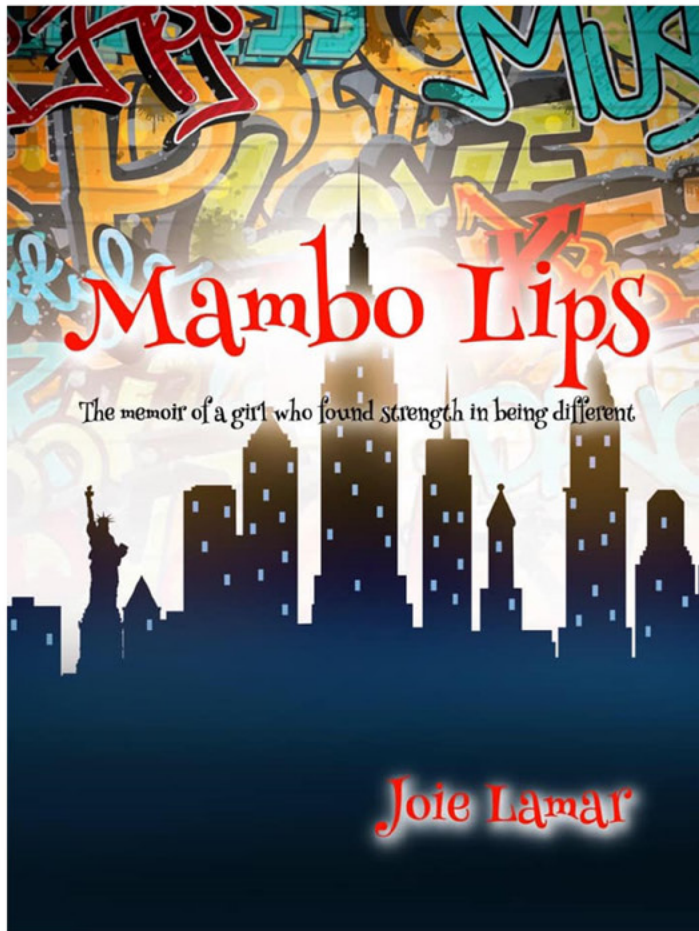
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# The Editor

Greetings and Salutations,

You're about to delve into our first ever Sports issue. Unlike other sports magazines, we're here to spotlight the queerer side of the games. Our two main features are on major sporting events taking place this summer, the EuroGames, and the Olympics. Despite the ongoing pandemic, the games must go on.

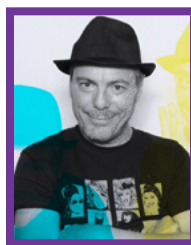
The EuroGames are happening in Copenhagen, and are exclusively queer in nature. Although competitive, there are plenty of apres-sport activities as well, as WorldPride happens simultaneously. Aaron Rothermund had the opportunity to chat with the organizing committee, as well as some of the competitors. In our second feature, Melissa MacMullin takes a look at how diversity and acceptance are championing change in the once staunch atmosphere of the Olympics. As athletes gathered in Tokyo this summer, many queer sports fans were tuning in to watch history in the making as this year's competition hosted the most openly-queer number of participants ever, including the first transgender competitor.

We have a special Wiggled Out guest columnist, Sister Teen LaQueefa, the Reverend Mother of the Victoria House, one of the Canadian Chapters of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. As well, we welcome Rolyn Chambers as our newest writer, who brings his long-standing, and much loved, Deep Dish column to theBUZZ. In keeping with our theme, he takes a look at the various queer films out there that reflect LGBTQ+ participation in sport.

In our regular columns, Cat Grant spoke with local Toronto boxer and sports advocate, Savoy Howe, Boyd Kodak chatted with trans sports advocate Stephanie Shostak, and Jon Pressick provides an insightful look into the world of Toronto's queer badminton league, BADinTO. Finally, as Toronto begins to reopen for business, we're hoping to have our Events listings return to the magazine in the near future. Until then, please continue to check online for the latest happenings.

We hope you enjoy our first ever Sports issue, and we'll be back in October with a second issue as well!

Bryen Dunn  
Editor-in-Chief



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Photo: Kelly Hansen

# EuroGames

By Aaron Rothermund

**Physical sport is often the best way to cross cultural barriers, allowing individuals to make group connections without necessarily sharing a spoken language.**

Although pursuing athletics can communicate values and activate communities, it frequently remains troublesome to queer players.

Both Denmark and Sweden have been ahead of the curve regarding human rights, including the decriminalization of homosexuality, legalizing same-sex unions, removing “transgender” from the list of mental illnesses, and providing gender confirmation surgery without prior medical approval.

**Copenhagen 2021**, taking place this month, is the first time **WorldPride** and **EuroGames** have been combined and shared between these two countries. The festival organizers were originally expecting up to a million athletes, spectators, and merrymakers throughout Copenhagen, Denmark and Malmö, Sweden. With

careful consideration and flexibility in planning during a pandemic, the newly reimagined festival is expected to welcome thousands of participants advocating for LGBTQ+ rights. Out of necessity, the organizers have also developed socially distant happenings, while navigating new ways to engage audiences on virtual platforms.

A wide-ranging cultural program will be at the heart of Copenhagen 2021. The opening ceremony features speeches on human rights, debates on gender politics, and lectures on creating equitable spaces for refugees. Athlete activism should also be expected, including mobilizing individuals and teams to voice their opposition to laws and policies that discriminate against LGBTQ+ people. The customarily expansive, WorldPride Parade has been replaced by a series of six smaller marches to follow safety guidelines and celebrate queer visibility.

When LGBTQ+ advocate and cultural change leader, **Amazin LêThi**, entered bodybuilding at age six, she quickly noticed that the sport was dominated by CIS-gendered white males. “I had very low self-worth and I lacked confidence, because as a child I never saw myself represented. I never saw another Asian person, or LGBTQ+ person, and I honestly felt like the only one,” LêThi tells me over Zoom. “Now, I think of how my work

encourages other Asian LGBTQ\_ athletes to live openly, and how just being visible can be a revolutionary act.”

LêThi shares her story of feeling isolated during her immigration process at world-wide leadership conferences. It was a natural progression for her to then create multiple awards and scholarships as an alternative to college, providing career path training aimed to inspire under-employed, at risk youths. Her work includes educating and examining erasure culture within queer sports, providing a role model for other Asian athletes, and breaking down boundaries regarding gender roles, specifically in bodybuilding.

As the first Vietnamese internationally published health and fitness author, and the first Asian ambassador for **Athlete Ally**, LêThi provides her own positive narrative to mainstream media. “I’m excited to be an Athlete Ally Ambassador because it means I’m able to further amplify the message of respect, inclusion, and equality in sport,” LêThi says. “In partnership with Copenhagen 2021, we want to continue the work of eradicating homophobia and transphobia, which begins with in-depth programs aimed at educational institutions providing resources for coaches, teachers, and mentors.”

Copenhagen 2021 will be the host to the largest EuroGames ever presented with more than 5,000 male, female, and non-binary athletes competing, regardless of their level of skill or their nationality. Two of the most notable feats are the official mandate of trans athletes competing in the category that matches their lived gender, and that various recreational categories include leagues for mixed-gender teams.

**Sports to the People** is an all-encompassing sports program taking place throughout the event, that encourages amateur and professional athletes to experience diverse sporting activities. These include Drag and gender performance, bicycle maintenance and workshops, and roller-skating throughout the city to amplified electronic music. The *Good Morning Run*, every morning from August 14th to 20th, will be a family-friendly guided jog through Copenhagen, to introduce visitors to the city.

The **Sports Leader Conference** is a space for over 200 sports leaders to share experiences, develop inclusive policies, and encourage political action. The conference will give LGBTQ+ organizations around the world, concrete tools to improve their day-to-day operations through better understanding of the challenges that LGBTQ+ athletes are currently facing.

**Triggerfish**, the only gay and lesbian water polo team in Toronto, are unable to attend Copenhagen 2021 as a unit due to the global pandemic, but Paul Wollaston has high hopes of travelling to the event as an individual player.



Photo: Kelly Hansen

Commonly referred to as “Silver Fish” by cheeky club members, Wollaston was recently acknowledged as the 2020/2021 *Blackhorse Catch of the Year* for outstanding skill or leadership by a competitive athlete. The silver fox by design, and lawyer by trade travelled to Stockholm, Sweden to participate in Eurogames 2015. He was also team captain when Triggerfish won a gold medal in the recreational division in Rome for EuroGames 2019, and he was named MVP when they competed in Melbourne, Australia for the International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics Championships in 2020.

In fact, before becoming a member of Triggerfish, Wollaston travelled to Denmark for another water- based sport. “The last time I went to Copenhagen I was rowing for the World OutGames in 2009,” Wollaston enlightened me. “I never felt welcome in many team sports, but I’m pretty comfortable in the water, and part of the fun is being physical and social surrounded by my gay teammates.”

For a sport that is traditionally dominated by white athletes, Triggerfish is a proud spectrum in terms of racial diversity. However, Wollaston admits, “We don’t have a huge contingent of lesbian players, which is something we really need to address. We need to understand why





that is and improve ways to make it more welcoming for everyone in the community to join our team."

"While the world of sports has generally become more inclusive towards LGBTQ+ athletes, phobia is still experienced as a contemporary issue. It influences athletes in such a way, that they do not come out to their teammates, or they abstain from participating in certain types of sport. During Copenhagen 2021, we want to facilitate conversations that help to improve conditions for LGBTQ+ people in sports," states the official press release.

This year, all eyes will be on Copenhagen 2021 as the EuroGames will demonstrate what diverse inclusion in sport really looks like, and WorldPride events will apply pressure on global governing bodies to ensure LGBTQ+ rights are cemented in policy. By encouraging safe access to group initiatives, and promoting equal opportunity for visibility in sports, we can eradicate homophobia and transphobia while creating positive representation of queers in leadership roles.

The EuroGames opening ceremony includes the WorldPride Run, and a Parade of Nations where competing athletes march from the vibrant Sports Village to Copenhagen's Rainbow Square. Those queer individuals who cannot travel to Denmark and Sweden will be able to watch the events on digital platforms including [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The EuroGames Closing Ceremony is combined with the Copenhagen 2021 Closing Ceremony, and includes live music, entertainment, speeches, and the official EuroGames handover to [Nijmegen 2022](#).

Aaron Rothermund wrote, directed, and produced two plays, *Ambiguous* and *Charming Monsters*. Aaron made three films as part of the Script to Screen program at Centennial College.

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# Tokyo's 2020 Summer Olympics

## A Turning Point in Sport and World History

By Melissa MacMullin

**"Unity in Diversity," is the motto for Tokyo's 2020 Summer Olympics. In sport we are all equal. The practice of sport is a human right. Sports have the power to bring people together – and together we can build a better, more peaceful world of acceptance and inclusivity.**

Originally postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games shaped a new concept of sporting excellence, drove societal change, enforced sustainable environmental efforts, and ignited the recognition of athletics through visibility. Hosting 11,091 athletes from over 200 nations, including the Refugee Team's second participation, the Tokyo Games were the first Olympics in history to feature openly transgender athletes, and over 100 proudly out competitors!

Non-discrimination is one of the founding pillars of the Olympic Movement. The Olympic spirit itself requires mutual

understanding, friendship, solidarity, and fair play. Athletes, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, culture, or political opinion, should be free to inspire the world with their strength of human spirit. There's a grander scheme of what builds sporting greatness and the basis for developing sporting policy, and law relies on ethics and human rights.

Ironically, Japan is the only nation in the G7 coterie of liberal democracies that does not allow same-sex marriage, nor do they support gender transition. There are currently no national anti-discrimination laws in place to protect those of non-heterosexual orientation, gender identity, race, or ethnic minorities. Japan's population is primarily in support of an inclusive approach to LGBTQ+ rights, with 62% in favour. This is a pivotal moment for the nation's international image to become a fellow global human rights leader.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), a non-profit, non-governmental, international organization made up of volunteers, provided the following statement to theBUZZ. "The IOC is committed to inclusion across the Olympic Movement, and recognizes that all athletes, regardless of their gender identity or orientation, should engage in safe and fair competition." The IOC has been addressing LGBTQ+ inequality since 2003 through implementation of significant initiatives and advocacy campaigns promoting the





Annie Guglia, Skateboarding Team Canada



Chelsea Wolfe, BMX Freestyle Team USA

accessibility of sport participation as it relates to fairness, safety, and non-discrimination.

The IOC allowed transgender athletes to participate in the Olympic Games back in 2004 if one had undergone gender reassignment surgery and hormone therapy for at least two years, and if they could present legal recognition of gender. In 2015, the Olympic Charter guidelines had been modified due to human rights conflicts, and had been updated for the 2016 Rio Olympics, however no transgender athletes were in that competition. For the Tokyo Olympics, transgender women must demonstrate a testosterone level of less than 10 nanomoles per litre for at least twelve months prior to competing.

Canadian swimmer and LGBTQ+ advocate, [Mark Tewksbury](#), came out publicly as the first gay Olympian in 1998, which helped start a national conversation around LGBTQ+ individuals participating in sporting competitions. After accumulating Canada's first gold medal for the 1992 Barcelona Games, 21 national titles, 7 world records, 5 honorary degrees, and most recently the 2020 *Companion Order of Canada*, he was elected as Vice President of the IOC in May of 2021 due to his diverse perspective as a leader in the global LGBTQ+ movement.

Tewksbury had even addressed the United Nations on the decriminalization of homosexuality. "It's all about the fight for basic rights and being celebrated for your individuality. In

some places in the world, it's extremely difficult to be treated equally," he explained. "For example, understanding the importance of correct pronouns being used to make people feel included," he added. "Once you know better, you must do better." He also expressed his contentment regarding the **Tokyo Pride House** in Shinjuku, which will become a permanent support and information centre post-Olympics for LGBTQ+ athletes, other individuals, their friends, families, and allies.

One of the athletes who made history at the Tokyo Olympics is [Laurel Hubbard](#), a 43-year-old New Zealander who became the first transgender Olympic athlete. Hubbard had been guaranteed a place in the women's super heavy weight category after having lifted 628 pounds in two lifts. She had won the silver medal at the 2017 World Championships, and is ranked #16 in the world. Her qualifying lifts rank her 4th out of the 14 qualifiers for Tokyo. New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Arden, in addition to Hubbard's 22-year-old rival, Charisma Amoe-Tarrant, stand behind Hubbard with utmost respect, and admiration. "I think even 10 years ago the world wasn't ready for an athlete like myself, and perhaps it is not ready now. But I got the sense at least that people were willing to consider me for these competitions, and it seemed like the right time to put the boots on and hit the platform." Hubbard explained in a recent statement.

[Chelsea Wolfe](#), a 28-year-old BMX freestyler is officially Team USA's first transgender alternate Olympian headed to Tokyo. She qualified for the alternate position by earning 5th place at the *UCI Urban World Championships*, which led to her placing 3rd overall in the Team USA rankings. Wolfe trains 3-4 times daily and considers freestyle biking as the optimal form of self-expression. "Cisgender people need to understand that trans people are literally no different than themselves. Their own relationship to gender and sex is based on the same foundations as ours, they just got lucky that they never had to fight to be recognized as their genders. Transgender and cisgender are just adjectives to describe what type of woman they are, just like tall versus short. There is no one universal human experience that can be considered the default. No one is better or more valid than the other." Wolfe expressed exclusively to theBUZZ. "Almost every single opposition to us stems from mistrust, a fear that we're pretending to be something we're not."

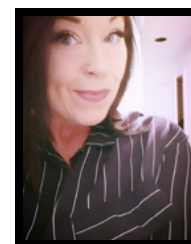
Montreal Skateboarder [Annie Guglia](#), is a proud lesbian, and activist for visibility and sport integration, who will be representing Team Canada at the Tokyo Games. Crowned *Canadian Skateboarding Champion* in 2020 and Vice-Champion in 2019, she is ecstatic to highlight the female side of a sport at the Tokyo Olympics, that is historically dominated by men. Throughout the years, 30-year-old Guglia felt that she did not have the same opportunities in skateboarding as her male counterparts. Growing up without any female role models, she is working diligently to be that person for the next generation. "We have seen this huge growth in the number of women in sport, as well as queer, trans, and gay people, of all backgrounds, religions, ages, styles, social classes, abilities, and skill levels. It's really nice to see." Guglia had said to Olympic.ca.

Sports give space and pave trailblazing paths for the LGBTQ+ community, refugees, and individuals of varied minorities to be seen as people first and foremost. Removing systemic barriers as we bring awareness to the forefront can only assist with the ending of stereotypes, preconceptions, and the eradication of inaccurate beliefs. This type of progressive movement and respectful recognition encourages LGBTQ+ athletes to use their voice, and well-earned and deserved platform for change. The more we speak about the topic of inclusivity on a global scale, the more this will help the push to develop ethically supportive policies and practices in sport.

*Images courtesy of International Olympic Committee (IOC)*

Melissa MacMullin is a freelance content writer and journalist for leading publications. A strong distinct queer Canadian voice with pride and purpose.

Author. Screenwriter. Performer. Part-time adventurer.





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# WIGGED OUT

BY SISTER TEEN LaQUEEFA

## SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE Nuns on the Run



These highly-irreverent drag nuns can often be found parading around queer events or hosting fundraisers for the community, dressed in gender-bending outfits while making complete spectacles of themselves with their antics. Their white clown faces, with ultra-saturated eye shadow colours, make them easily recognizable. The only remnants of anything resembling a nun is the white wimple (nun's headdress) and the white collar around the neck.

Originating in San Francisco in the late 1970's, they have expanded throughout the United States, and worldwide; to Europe, South America, Australia, and here in Canada. Their Canadian Chapters, called Houses, can be found in Vancouver (*The Abbey of the Long Cedar Canoe*), Victoria (*The Order of the Moist Brollie*), and Regina (*The Breadbasket Sisters*). Each Sister has a unique wimple, which immediately identifies themselves as to which House they belong.

*The Sisters* were the first group to create safe sex pamphlets which they handed out with condoms at bathhouses and gay bars in the early days of the HIV pandemic, creating their service model for the gay men's community. Since then, they have now expanded to support the entire queer community, as well as all marginalized groups, including those experiencing homelessness and addiction. However, no cause is too big or too small for *The Sisters*. They once held a bingo night fundraiser for a family after a house fire.

Sister Teen LaQueefa, the Reverend Mother of the *Victoria House*, said, "The Sisterhood's reason for being is to promulgate universal joy and expiate stigmatic guilt." While quite the mouthful, she says, "It's simply being able to get out of your own head, radiate joyfulness by making people laugh, and be a listening ear to those in need. Basically, to provide a queer version of a confessional in a safe and non-judgmental space and offer advice and contact information for support groups."

If you would like more information on how to start a House in your city, or join an existing House, contact the [Mother House in San Francisco](#).

Sister Teen LaQueefa (or Queefie, if you want) is, currently, the Reverend Mother of the Victoria BC House ("chapter") of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (SPI).



**The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence**, known simply and lovingly as *The Sisters*, is a form of drag that began within the LGBTQ+ community, and has since grown in visibility.

Once only comprised of gay men, the Order has expanded to include queer, cis, trans, non-binary, and straight-allies. The only prerequisite to join is to want to be of service and support to the community at large. They no longer limit themselves to presenting just as Sisters with wimples and collars. Members can now identify as Brothers, or gender-neutral Guards. Regardless of how they present, they take vows of service and they take these vows very seriously.

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Born in Miramichi, New Brunswick, [Savoy Howe](#) didn't come from an athletic family. A tomboy who didn't want to play with girls, she played T-ball at age 7. When she relocated to Toronto in 1989 with a theatre degree, her initial plans were to be a performer. In 1992 she found herself on the best stage ever - a boxing ring!

"A boxing coach, Razor Ray Marsh, asked me to hit his hand pad and then told me I had a wicked punch," she explains. Savoy's boxing journey included participating at the first Provincials for women in 1994. "I fought a police officer from Thunder Bay, and I scored a Silver and a jaw injury," she proclaims. Fifteen years later, Savoy was a Provincial Gold Medalist, and a 2010 National Silver Medalist.

What's her advice to aspiring young girls wanting to get into boxing? "Have a guardian attend classes in the beginning with you, even if it's just sitting on a bench by the door. Check out a few different gyms until you find a coach that you connect with. Don't let anyone touch you without your permission."

Savoy has found joy in helping and coaching others. She mentions her most memorable coaching experience as, "Learning some incredible coaching techniques from a coach in Florida. Only to find out later that it was **Muhammad Ali's** coach, Angelo Dundee."

She knew the first time she led a women's class, there was a need for a women's boxing space. "When there were no fellahs in the gym, the women got so big in their bodies, and it showed me that this would have to happen a lot." In 1996

Savoy opened the [Toronto Newsgirls Boxing Club](#), Canada's first all-female and trans positive boxing club, and the first boxing club in North America to have a Trans Inclusion Policy.

After 24 years of surviving, with many challenges, *Newsgirls* recently shut it's doors for good due to the pandemic. "We overcame pretty much everything, but we had to throw in the towel to COVID, as we didn't want anyone to get knocked out."

Savoy was the recipient of a *Toronto Star Readers Choice Award* in 2019, and was recently inducted into the *Sports Hall of Honour* in 2020, with the official ceremony to be held in the near future.

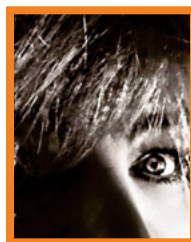
So what are Savoy's future plans? "I'm going to start a motorcycle gang called the *Bad Newsgirls*, and a softball team called the *Bad News Girls*. I actually have no clue really, but I am very excited to see what comes my way."

We are too!

You can reach Savoy at [torontonewsgirls@hotmail.com](mailto:torontonewsgirls@hotmail.com)

Cat Grant (OCAD) is a multidisciplinary fine artist, with a focus on photography, multimedia portraiture, and illustrating children's books. She's also a published poet, and senior reporter for *On the Couch* LGBTQ TV show.

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Weight loss should not be considered typical. Income level achievements are dependent upon individual associate's business skills, personal ambition, time commitment, activity and demographic factors.

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## Queer Sporting Flicks



Belami porn after-school special. The subtext of fitting into society, and onto a team, comes to head in a crazed night scene that sees a storm intensify as the main character descends into a pit of despair.

**Canadian Connection:** Marnie McBean, three-time Olympic gold medalist rower comes out after retiring in 1997.

### BOXING

#### Beautiful Boxer (2003)

Based on a true story, this film follows the life of Parinaya Charoemphol, a famous Muay Thai kick boxer known as Nong Toom. From a poor child who loved makeup, to enrolling in a boys sports camp, and realizing that the best way out of her situation was to earn enough money through kickboxing to pay for her sex change, a sport she ends up dominating. The film's success is due to the luxurious cinematic scope of its poetic and sensitive story telling.

**Canadian Connection:** In 1994, retired boxer Mark Leduc comes out as gay, two years after winning the silver medal at the Barcelona Olympics.

### SWIMMING

#### The Shiny Shrimps (2019)

This French Canadian comedy tackles homophobia from the point of view of the perpetrator. An Olympic swimming champion makes anti-gay comments during a press conference, and his "punishment" is to coach a gay water polo team preparing to compete at the Gay Games. Campy, musical, and comically stereotypical, it has been called the Priscilla Queen Of The Desert of the gay sport film genre.

**Canadian Connection:** In 1998, Olympic medalist Mark Tewksbury comes out as gay, and would later join the board of the now defunct World OutGames.

Jamaican born Rolyn Chambers grew up in the suburbs of Mississauga, before attending Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD). In 2001, he began his Deep Dish column with fab Magazine, which ran for a full decade, allowing him to interview everyone from clubbers and promoters, to celebrities and politicians. Deep Dish has now been resurrected once again here in theBUZZ. IG @rahrhrolyn



Here's the dish. Over the last 17-months, I have come to several conclusions from the comfort of my couch. One is that I haven't participated in sports since high school, unless one includes Competitive Crotch Hunting at Hanlan's Point in that category. However, during COVID cocooning, I have watched a lot of queer movies about sports. Below are four queer films about sports that deserve a place on the podium, and in your hearts.

### SOCCER/EUROPEAN FOOTBALL

#### Mario (2018)

Two rival football players compete for a coveted placement on their national team. But a night of horseplay involving a wet willy (the finger in the ear) leads to their willies being really wet. Both must decide if they are willing to live a life of lies to be national football players, or live openly as men who play with balls.

**Canadian Connection:** Olympic medalist Rebecca Quinn, an active member of the Canadian National Football team comes out as transgender in 2020.

### ROWING

#### Summer Storm (2004)

This German coming of age film is beautifully shot, and centres around two beautiful young men at a summer rowing camp. With ample skin and half-naked horseplay, it's like a

# COMING SOON



## I Miss You Mom / Emi Ana Meshtaalek

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el Hashem with Count Klassy

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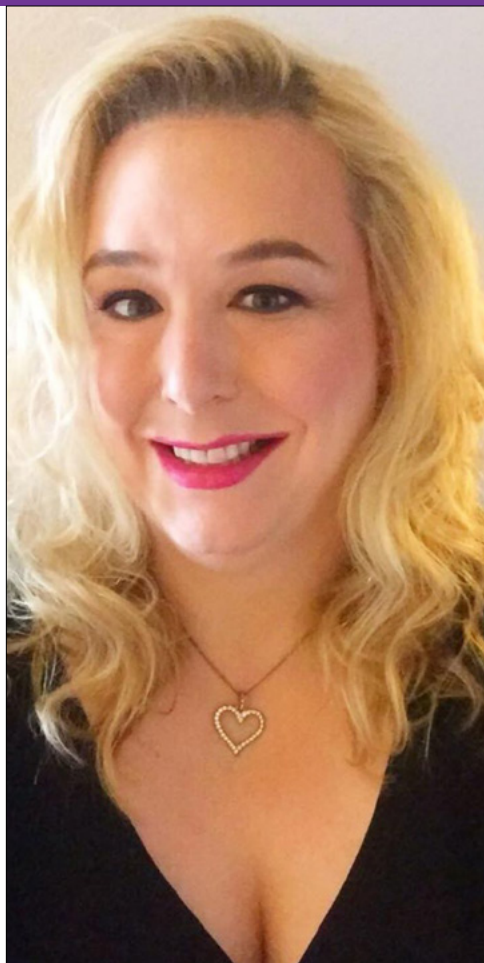




# A KODAK MOMENT

## Stephanie Shostak

BY BOYD KODAK



States. I am also a referee Clinician, Evaluator, Supervisor, and Mentor. I concluded a 12 year term as the President of the Volleyball Alberta Officials in July of 2020. I continue to be a member of the You Can Play: Western Canada Board, and a member of the Canadian Federal LGBTQ2S+ Sports Inclusion Task Force.

**BK** - During that time, which was the most exciting event for you?

**SS** - I always enjoy refereeing [U SPORTS](#) and College matches in Canada and the NCVF Men's and Women's Collegiate Club Volleyball Championships in the United States. The most exciting event for me was when I was assigned as Alberta's referee to the 2017 Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg, where I was nominated as the Second Referee for the Women's Bronze Medal match.

**BK** - What are you looking forward to next?

**SS** - After not being on the court since the middle of February 2020, due to COVID-19, I am looking forward to returning once it is safe to do so.

**BK** - Where can we find out more about your work?

**SS** - When I am not refereeing, I am a Senior Information and Privacy Manager with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, and I also am the President and CEO of my own consulting company - Prism Consulting Services Ltd.

**BK** - Future plans?

**SS** - I plan to continue to give back to the sport of volleyball by continuing to be a Referee, Clinician, Evaluator, Supervisor, and Mentor for as long as I am able to help with the development of current and up and coming referees.

**BK** - Any message you would like to put out there?

**SS** - When I came out publicly as transgender, in the summer of 2013, I thought I had to give up everything with refereeing. I was proven wrong as it was all between my ears. There is nothing better than living as your true, authentic self, and I am glad and fortunate to have had the support of the volleyball community around me.

Boyd Kodak is an award-winning trans activist, musician, writer, filmmaker, curator, and festival/entertainment director.



Stephanie Shostak is a transgender advocate and LGBTQ+ sports advocate. She is a board member of [You Can Play](#), an organization dedicated to ensuring equality, respect and safety for all athletes, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. As the current Director of the [Trans Equality Society of Alberta](#), she has been actively involved in numerous initiatives for Trans inclusion and equity. Stephanie is also the President/ CEO of her own company, [Prism Consulting Services Ltd.](#)

**Boyd Kodak** - Tell us about your accomplishments in sports?

**Stephanie Shostak** - I am a Volleyball Canada certified National Referee, who has refereed matches up to and including the university level in both Canada and the United

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## BADinTO

GRAB YOUR BIRDIE, LET'S PLAY



Photo: PaulHenmanPhotography.ca

Pssst! A little birdie told me a cock hold's the world record for the [fastest moving object in sport](#)! Okay, okay, let's clarify that this distinction belongs to a shuttlecock—the key equipment needed to enjoy a rousing badminton match. Enjoyed around the world, those in the GTA can get into the swing of things with **BADinTO**—the local Toronto LGBTQ+ badminton league.

Founded in 1993, BADinTO runs two seasons, Fall and Winter, from September to May. League play happens on Wednesday and Friday nights in a couple of school gyms in the city's east end. Boasting an average of 120 members per year, the league fills six courts each night, providing players with some healthy exercise and a community connection.

"When I joined the club I was new to Canada and had no local friends," shares Peter Conquest, the club's Vice President. "Since I live outside of the City I had fewer chances for meeting people, especially from within the LGBTQ+ community. It's an excellent opportunity to socialize with people during the club nights while you sit out between games, and we also have dinner at various local restaurants afterwards."

BADinTO offers a fun, inviting atmosphere for people of all ages and skill levels. The league sets up games so that pairs are evenly matched, and games are equally competitive and entertaining. Throughout the season, the league hosts clinics for people to learn more about the sport and better their

technique, and more experienced players are happy to offer tips and advice for those newer to the game.

While plans for the next season are currently uncertain, the crowning events of each year are the *Princess* and *Queen's Cup* tournaments. The more informal *Princess Cup* is a doubles play, members-only event that raises money for charity. Players of various levels are paired up and various prizes are awarded. The person who earns the most individual points is awarded the title BADinTO Princess!

The *Queen's Cup* is the leagues season-ending tournament, which includes a banquet and medal presentation. This tourney is open to anyone, and features five levels of competition so everyone can participate. Past members, as well as community members often come to play in the *Queen's Cup*, as well as others from *G-Bleu*—BADinTO's sister club in Montreal. Winners take home the *Queen's Cup*!

Step up to the net and raise a racquet for a great time with BADinTO!

Jon Pressick is a writer who focuses on sex and sexuality. View his work at [sexinwords.ca](#)



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In response to COVID-19 and the closure of venues due to restrictions on social gatherings, all events, festivals, and other group activities have either been cancelled or postponed for the immediate future.

In the meantime there have been several creative virtual events taking place online.

Please check our listing of events that are happening from a screen near you - [www.thebuzzmag.ca/events](http://www.thebuzzmag.ca/events)

Our regular events print section will return as soon as venues start reopening.

Let's all stay safely connected.

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