

TKO: THE KEVIN OPINION LGBT Community in Athletics, Potential to Pave Path to Future

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In the past few years, there has been an apparent change in attitude towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, in which being “different” has become more widely accepted.

According to a recent ESPN survey, 86 percent of randomly polled National Football League (NFL) players disagreed with the claim that “a player’s sexual orientation matters to you.” Though this may sound promising, only 49 percent of the 51 athletes surveyed believe that a gay player would be socially accepted in a locker room. This shows promise of great progress, but also great bias.

In an ideal world, sex and gender identification are separate from determining whether a player is skilled or accepted in a social setting. However, there is an inherent prejudice that haunts the world. For example, Rene Portland, Penn State University girls’ basketball coach, claimed in 1991 to forbid lesbian athletes from joining her team. Even over two decades later, the National Public Radio’s (NPR) website reported last year that certain NFL teams were asking prospects questions regarding sexuality. Of course, the NFL stepped in and investigated, but what can be taken away from this story and the example set by Portland is how attitudes toward LGBT athletes can be negative and how discrimination can remain prevalent. This negative attitude sets back society and its progress in accepting others.

There has also been a shift in the attitudes towards LGBT athletes on a nationwide standard. For instance, the response has been generally positive for openly gay athletes such as basketball player Jason Collins and football player Michael Sam. Attitudes like this that inspire real change and display how the prejudice LGBT athletes face is slowly decreasing. On the court, one can demonstrate a positive attitude towards LGBT teammates. For starters, a simple gesture or attempt to befriend someone else speaks volumes. Not only does it show character in the form of sportsmanship, it shows willingness to adopt new paradigms of tolerance.

Furthermore, a revolutionary California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) rule allows a student to participate on sporting teams based on which gender they identify with, not necessarily based on their biological sex. By focusing on students’ needs, CIF has made a positive step towards the future in freedom of expression. Rules and regulations must also play an integral part in ensuring that an athlete is not discriminated against.

In other words, one must think beyond their closed-minded fear of a LGBT athlete, or person for that matter.

LGBT Athletes, Rights and Equality on the Rise

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As the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community grows, athletes from high school to professional leagues have become more comfortable in coming out about their sexuality. The prevalence of openly LGBT athletes has increased over the years and, in turn, a rise in LGBT acceptance is becoming more prominent in the sports world.

Professional athletes have announced their sexuality to the public while playing on college teams and in leagues, such as the National Basketball Association and the National Football League. Jason Collins of the NBA, Brittney Griner of the Women’s National Basketball Association and football player Michael Sam from the University of Missouri were among the first gay athletes to openly speak of their sexuality while still active in their sport. Though their announcements initially caused a huge media frenzy, these athletes are now known as popular LGBT inspirations.

“I’m not afraid of who I am. I’m not afraid to tell the world who I am. I’m a college graduate, I’m African American, and I’m gay,” Sam said shortly after coming out in an interview with ESPN.

For transgender athletes, the 2013-2014 sports season included the issuing of a new rule by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF). The policy went into effect in February and allows students to participate in CIF activities and sports in the gender team they identify with. The federation states that school districts can determine an athlete’s eligibility to play in a gender that does not match birth records. If a district turns down an athlete’s request, the decision may be appealed to the federation for further consideration. This amendment essentially has the power to allow a transgender female, who was born male, to play on a high school girls’ softball team, as one example.

Because LGBT acceptance is increasing, organizations and leagues supporting openly homosexual athletes have been founded and continue expanding. The Gay and Lesbian International Sports Association (GLISA), is made up of worldwide organizations who strive to protect LGBT sports culture, equality and rights. Additionally, the Gay Games, a quadrennial festival and sporting event, serves as a reminder that athletes are all “equal under the founding principles of participation, inclusion and personal best.” The Games are open to all adults regardless of sexual

orientation or athletic ability, and focus primarily on being a voice for the LGBT community.

Recently during the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, Russia’s anti-gay propaganda law brought the most controversy in Olympic history. The law issues fines for speaking in defense of gay rights in front of minors. For the seven openly gay athletes who competed in the Winter Olympics during that time, it became a public and personal issue as the law contributed to an increase of homophobic violence.

“Russia passing this law is unfair and a bit discriminatory. It makes it look like they do not support gay rights at all. As an athlete, your sexuality should not matter. I would support a gay teammate regardless; we are all human beings,” junior track and field athlete David Hernandez said.

Professional athletes coming out and the Winter Olympic Games are examples of how LGBT rights are receiving public attention, inspiring athletes in every level to be true to who they are. As the LGBT community continues to grow and prosper, the rise in equality for LGBT athletes seems promising in breaking new ground for the future.

MOOR graphic by SIMON ZHAO



MOOR photo by YIBEI LIU

DEFYING GRAVITY AHS hurdler Natalie Munoz trains tediously over the spring break to improve her skills.

Varsity Badminton Prepares for Future League Games



MOOR photo by SHANNON KHA

THE STARTOFF In their first league match, the co-ed varsity badminton team played against the San Marino Titans on March 25 at Alhambra.

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As Almont League began on March 25, the AHS badminton team faced the San Marino Titans for their first league game. The Moors had many rallies against the Titans but fell short due to San Marino’s offense. The badminton team plans on working on their flaws as they prepare for their next league game, currently holding a record of 0-2.

“Many of my seniors left last

year but with upcoming players this year, we managed to pull through and practice often so we can improve daily. We expanded preseason for the players so they get in-game experience but overall the boys will be really great next year because they will all be returners,” Head Coach Luis Brambilla said.

Despite many senior players leaving from last year’s squad, the Moors managed to get more prospects in who are now athletes of the badminton program.

As Brambilla teaches the new members the basics and fundamentals of badminton, such as hitting and rallying, the rest of the team plans to continue improving on certain flaws.

“This year is tough not only because we have a lot of new members on the team but also because we play many junior national high schools such as San Marino and Diamond Bar. With good competition, the players learned pretty well and they should be ready,” captain Derwin Teguh said.

Moors A-track-ting Attention in Almont League

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Spring is in the air, which brings along rebirth for many species in the animal kingdom. Not only is this rebirth taking place in nature, but also at AHS on the track.

Last year, the varsity boys’ team came in fourth place, while the girls’ came in first, undefeated in league. This season, the Moors hoped to begin strong with a number of new members, along with experienced returners. The team currently runs under the leadership

of Head Coach Andrew Shapiro.

One predicament currently facing the team is the search for coaches in individual events.

“The one thing this team needs is permanent coaches, because over the past three years, we have had a few different coaches that have come and gone pretty quickly,” junior Logan Tavares said.

The team had their first league meet against the Schurr Spartans on March 27, which both the varsity and froshoph girls winning, while both boys’ teams did not.


Despite a rough start for the boys, the Moors have a posi-

tive outlook for the rest of the league season. The girls, however, hope to continue to dominate the league rankings as they did last year, and be undefeated once more. Both teams hope to improve in their upcoming meets.

“I think that the one thing we can improve on is having more school spirit, because as of now, [the team is] not really enthusiastic at the meets,” junior William Wong said.

The Moors will compete in their next Almont League match against the Bell Gardens Lancers on Apr. 10.

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<small>Students must register based on the grade they will be entering in Fall, 2014. Students from other districts are invited to apply.</small>	

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