

PRIDE GUIDE



BEST PRACTICE FOR SOCCER ATHLETES, TEAMS, CLUBS & LEAGUES

whats inside:

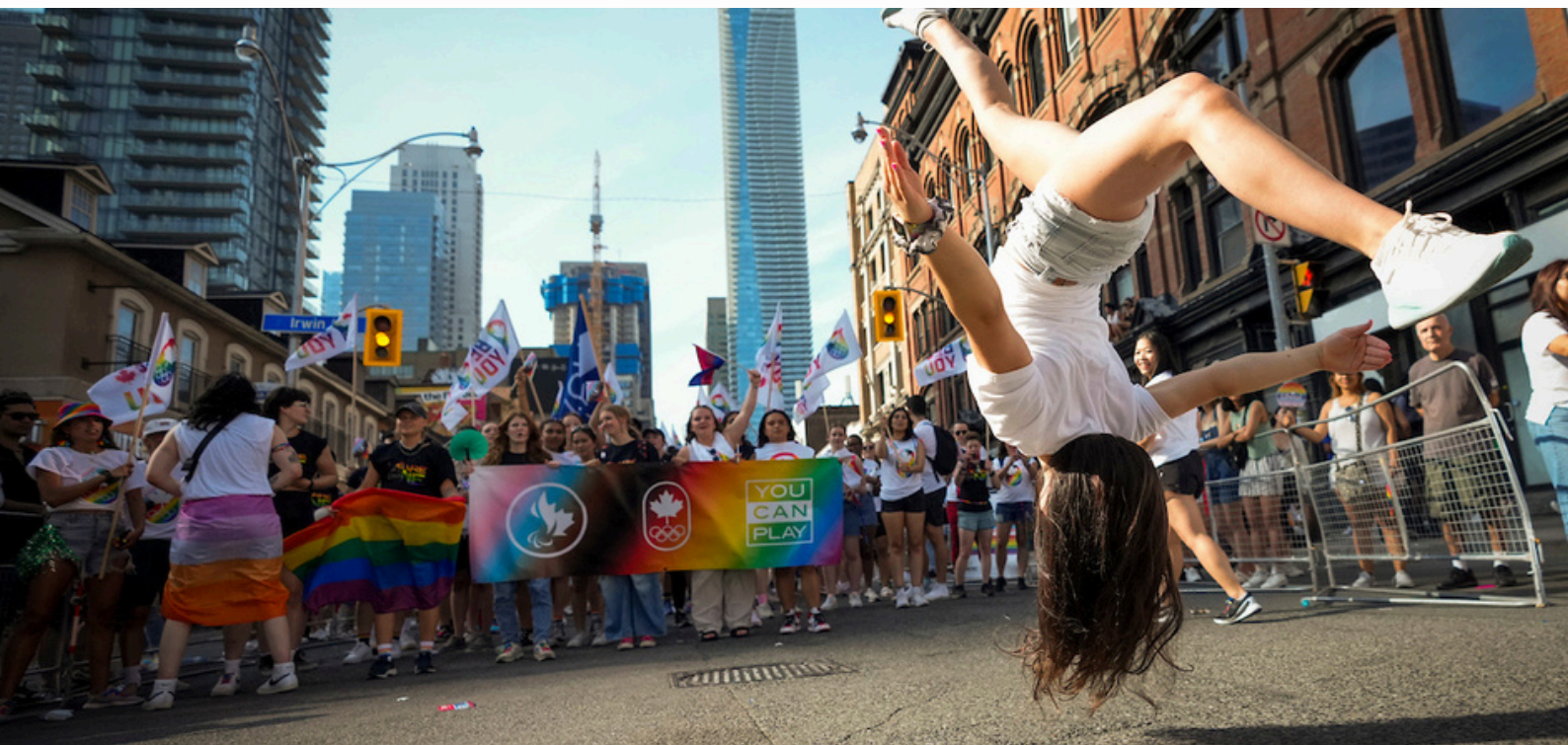
- You Can Play - Your Pride Support Partner!
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OUR PARTNER - YOU CAN PLAY

You Can Play's work is grounded in sport and creating a welcoming and safe place for every athlete, coach, referee, administrator, fan and participant. From our founding by the Burke family, Brian Kitts, and Glenn Witman, we have worked side by side with the athletic organizations across the world to make sports a welcoming and inclusive place for every athlete and participant. Our work aims to evolve locker room and spectator culture, consult on inclusion policies, build stronger fan engagement and increase participation in sports. Through our work **we provide our partners with the tools and support to build safer access to sports, and create bridges between sports brands and the LGBTQ+ community.**



We are here for you!

You Can Play is here to support your work and efforts, you are not alone! We specialize in sport and inclusion initiatives that truly make a difference. We are sport people passionate about working with you and your program to ensure all are welcome and safe. Reach out to our team of experts to schedule a call; we will become a part of your team to make your inclusion efforts effective and engaging for your community!



PLANNING YOUR PRIDE PROGRAM



Pride celebrations and initiatives require careful planning and preparation to make a meaningful impact. Rushing to organize something at the end of May can make your efforts seem insincere or reactionary. Start planning early to ensure authenticity and effectiveness. Use the checklist below to identify activities and initiatives that align best with your organization.

Gather The Team



Your planning should begin with bringing your whole team together, not just assigning this to one person or department. Gather your team, including athletes, coaches, social media and communications folks, marketing experts, outreach enthusiasts, HR pros, executives, AND members of the LGBTQ+ community and organizations. Make sure everyone's on board to ensure your plan creates the impact you're aiming for. Do not *guess* if your plan will help the community, ask during the planning process.

Many community partners are great fits for collaboration with your organization. Reach out to join their initiatives and invite them to be part of yours. The more connected you are within the community, the louder your message of inclusivity will resonate, enhancing your organization's brand.



[Event Plan Outline](#)



[Pride Activations](#)



[Step-By-Step
Activations Guide](#)

THE PLAN

Pride Planning Checklist

Before you start, it's best to plan your Pride Event and promote it effectively. Ensure that you have the support of the leadership at your organization. Here are some suggested initial steps:



- Get your FULL team together - including athletes and coaches, operations, marketing, comms/social, development, leadership, etc.
- Find local LGBTQ+ leaders (non-profits, affinity groups, volunteer orgs, educators, artists) to involve in your planning - include them early.
- Plan the events - When planning events, make sure they are manageable - one meaningful event is often better than several small events that stretch resources.
- Look into events that are already scheduled to take place in your community (Pride Night, Pride Parade, etc.) and contact about participation opportunities. You can also share these events with your membership to show support for community initiatives!
- Design your logo, website banners, social media avatars, and other items you will change for pride. Work with a local LGBTQ+ artist!
- Get your merch developed - Both for your team internally (t-shirts for parade marchers) and your fans / community externally to purchase on your site. Also banners, signs, flags, etc. for your events
- Schedule your external communication (suggestions in the social media section). Education and information posts are the best options!
- Publish your plans internally - Let your organization's team know what your team will be doing for Pride. Transparency is key -- talk about it!
- Bring the plan to fruition and enjoy the celebration with your community!

ACTIVATION & EVENT IDEAS

June fills up quickly, so plan accordingly. **THE BEST** thing you can do is to support an existing event run by the local LGBTQ+ community. **Be intentional** about your activations and approach the work authentically wanting to develop a relationship, not to recruit players! Below are a number of options, reach out to YCP with your ideas.

Pride Games/Tournaments

Pride games, matches, meets, tournaments, scrimmages, etc. are a great way to showcase your passion for inclusion and specifically welcome a community to your sport.

Don't overthink these events: they don't need to be only in June. In fact, June gets busy and you are likely better doing them outside of the June window.



Pride Parades

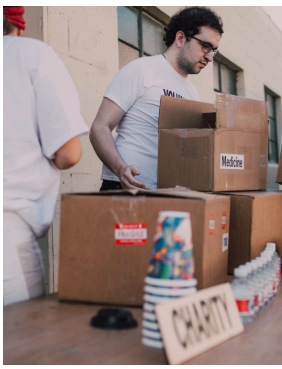
Join your local parade! If you can, purchase a spot in the parade, and invite your athletes, admins, fans, etc. Also invite local LGBTQ+ organizations that may not be able to afford a spot in the parade. This is a great way to connect with the LGBTQ+ community and find new fans. If you cannot get your own spot, connect with another group to join their effort!



Learn to Play Events!

Bringing the LGBTQ+ community into your sport involves attending them and offering (or providing) opportunities to learn how to play, the rules, terminology, etc. Involve your athletes and staff to run learn to play or learn the rules sessions, to introduce your sport to a new potential fan base.





Volunteer Events

Having your athletes, coaches and staff interact with the community is vital to understand why Pride celebrations are important. Send your folks to a local LGBTQ+ organization's event or facility to volunteer, and learn about their work and stories. Your time and willingness to learn supports local LGBTQ+ organizations.



Flag Service

Flag Exchange: Allow fans to bring their Pride flags to the game and exchange them for team-branded Pride flags.

On-Field Flag Ceremony: During halftime have a flag ceremony where fans can hold and display their Pride flags together.



Meet + Greet

Host player meet and greets with fans:

- **Player Participation:** Encourage players to interact with fans and take photos, showing their support for the LGBTQ+ community.
- **VIP Access:** Offer VIP packages with exclusive meet and greet opportunities.



Education Sessions

Education truly connects people to the cause, and allows your organization to speak about what Pride has meant to you and your community. **You Can Play's education** for your staff, athletes and community will bring inclusion into sharp focus and set a standard.



Panels + Discussions

Panel discussions and story telling is a great way to feature people in your organization, learn about someone else's journey and develop proximity to a community you may not know. Zoom chats, discussions, storytelling, and speakers are a great way to change the pace of any event.

...or support an existing event!

June gets crowded! It will mean so much to a local organization to have you show up and support their event!

PRIDE IN YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can either be a powerful asset or a missed opportunity when it comes to your Pride promotion and initiatives. Avoid the mistake of simply posting a rainbow or “happy Pride” on June 1st without any further engagement, and expecting positive results.

Please have your full schedule mapped out for the month before it kicks off, and also prepare for how you will handle comments, messages, etc. You Can Play can work with your team to ensure your posts are fit for purpose and voice is ready for the celebration. We will also work with your team on response 'do's and don'ts'.

Suggested Media Plan for your organization:

- **End of May** - Publish your Plans! Share a full schedule of your planned events and activations for the month
- **June 1** - Debut your Pride-themed or rainbow logo, and wish your audience a Happy Pride Month!
- **Week 1 of June** - Feature by liking, sharing, or collaborating with a local organization doing good in the community. Add a link to their donation page.
- **Week 2 of June** - Feature champions! Choose folks from your organization/team and also from the local advocacy community to feature. Social ‘Takeovers’ by these folks are great.
- **Week 3 of June** - Highlight history and education. Why is pride important; tell the story of your local or national community. Stats and education can help connect people to the cause. Link to credible resources since misinformation can hurt your efforts.
- **Week 4 of June** - This is usually parade time! Feature your involvement, or your events and activism.



[Best Practices](#)



[Response Guide](#)

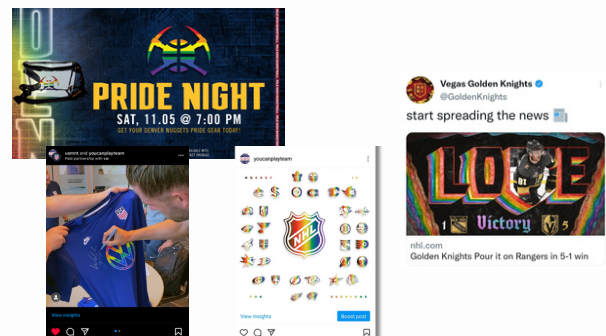


[Hashtag Guide](#)

PRIDE IN YOUR SOCIALS - CONT

Feature your Work

Highlight your team/organization/league's efforts throughout the year for when you did pride activations or engagements. Celebrate what you have done and accomplished for inclusion over the past year.



Feature your Community

Feature a local LGBTQ+ leader, influencer, change-maker. Make it look like a sport card and hype them up like you would your athletes! Featuring influential local individuals and organizations is a great way to use your platform to amplify queer voices, resources, or services.

Share your Knowledge

Post information and education to inform your community about the LGBTQ+ community. Remember, your strength is your community, all of whom can benefit from this education!



Hashtags & Tagging

Find your local organizations to tag to give them additional reach. Also make sure you choose a tag you use all month long to be able to conglomerate your social posts and track impact.

We suggest: **#youcanplay #inclusivesport #prideinsport**

PRIDE MONTH MESSAGING

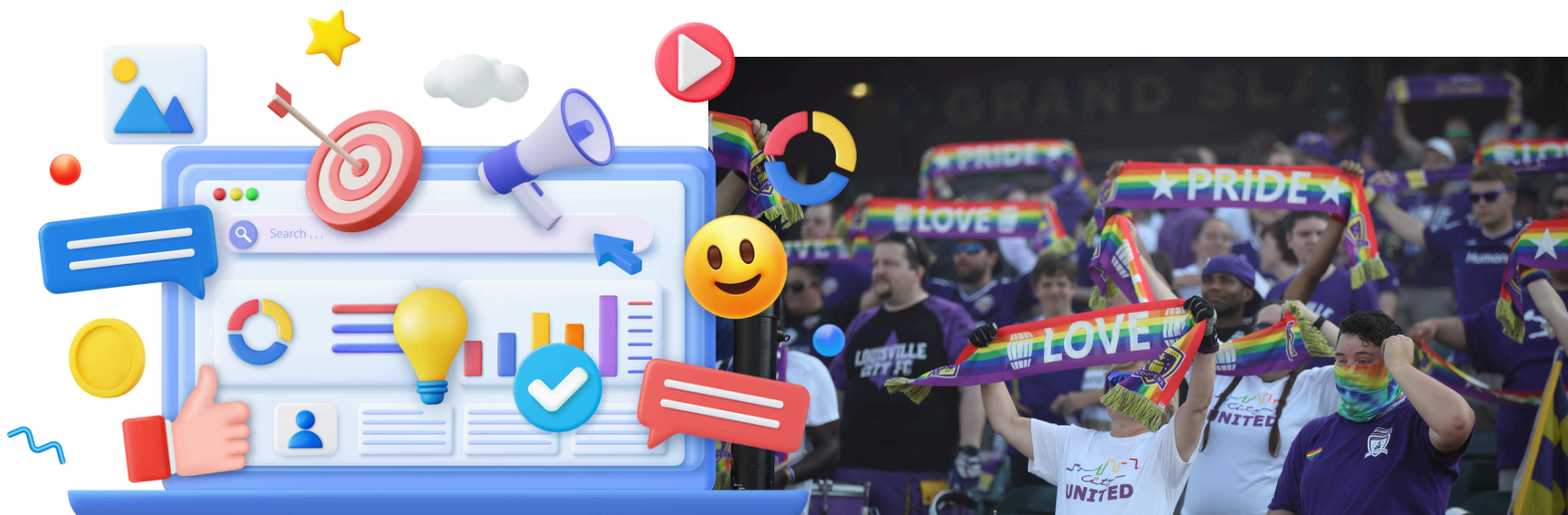
Social Media & Communications

Posting your values and support is important, but can be a challenge to navigate. Reach out to You Can Play to help with when and how to post to ensure you are being authentic and supporting the community appropriately.

Communicate internally about what you are doing and why. Many times we work with organizations that do great work, but their own team or staff are unfamiliar with what is happening or why the organization is taking these steps.

Respond to Negativity on Social Media

- “Equal rights for others does not mean fewer rights for you. All are welcome here.”
- “We believe sport is for everyone, and we will put in the work to make sure everyone knows it!”
- “The growth and health of our game/sport relies on finding new fans and new participants...welcoming the LGBTQ+ community is one of our expansion focuses”
- “Gender expression and sexual orientation didn’t have any bearing on athletic skill, but showing up authentically has a direct impact on individual success.”
- “We encourage everyone -- players and fans -- to show up as their authentic selves.”



VISIBILITY & BRANDING

Support in 2024 for the LGBTQ+ community has to go further than a rainbow logo, as the community is seeing increases in violence and attacks on its very existence. Be thoughtful in your approach to your Pride Month branding and think about how important the visibility is for the community.

Pride Logo Design

Work with artists in your community to draft what your pride logo could be, and what it communicates about your values and your support of the LGBTQ+ Community.

Here is an example of Canucks' 2023 Pride Logo and the story behind it.



Sign and Banner Design

Here are some templates for ideas for your signage and branding, but feel free to get creative with your designs and voice!

- New Signage for Bathrooms
- An 'All are Welcome' above a urinal or near concession areas can be a great time to catch people
- Signage in team spaces
- Small signs as gifts to participants

[click here for sample Pride banner designs](#)



MERCH & GIFTS



T-Shirts, Clothing, Scarves, Hats

Making an item for your team, coaches, staff, community is a great way to bring everyone together around your inclusion efforts. Consider partnering with a local vendor to make merch available for your community to purchase.

Show your organization's pride by offering some items (hopefully year round, not just June) to support the community...and utilize the proceeds to support your inclusion efforts!



Buttons, Stickers, Bracelets, Bags

Many stadiums and parades do not allow stickers, but they are a great gift for water-bottles, offices, etc. Get creative on items you get for your community!



Local LGBTQ+ Organizations

Providing items to a local LGBTQ+ league, youth organization, or LGBTQ+ non-profits can be a great way to connect with the community!

Great Idea!

Find a local LGBTQ+ artist, and engage them to make a special pride logo! Tell their story, share the meaning behind the logo, connect with the community.



LGBTQ Merch FAQ



THE RAINBOW QUESTION

To Rainbow or Not to Rainbow... Pride Logo Considerations FAQ



Should we change our logo and brand for June?

This is a constant question, and should be, for any organization taking this initiative seriously. The short answer is YES, make a change to your logo, your look, your branding, etc. to celebrate the community. BUT, if that is the only thing you will do to support the community, you are in for a rough road of feedback from all sides.

Why is changing our logo impactful?

Making public statements like changing your logo or website during Pride Month is a great visibility item and can communicate to your people internally, and your community externally, that you care about and actively welcome the LGBTQ+ community to your sport, your team, your league. When done as part of an overall initiative and year-round inclusion work, this will be a wonderful celebration.

We haven't done much for Pride before, should we rainbow?

'Again, YES! But ensure that you communicate that this is a first and initial step you are taking into inclusion work and there will be more. Engage with LGBTQ+ community members in your area, and let them know about your interest in learning about how to support them. Find an artist within that community to 're-work' your logo and help you communicate your inclusive intentions.

How do we avoid performative allyship?

Authentic connection and partnership comes from each side having the best interest of their partner in mind, and that means supporting the community with no thought to the ROI. Engagement will come when you have proven that you care and support the community through the easy and the hard times...and stand with them when others are making laws and statement about who should and should not be allowed in sport or society.

MEASUREMENT OF OUR WORK

Measuring the impact and outcomes are key to continuing to find support for these efforts. Doing good is a wonderful thing, but much of this work can be classified as ‘feeling like we are doing good’, over actually making positive change.

The big question to ask while planning, doing and evaluating your inclusion efforts:

- ***Did this make me/us feel like we did something inclusive, did this actually work to include people authentically in our sport?***

TRACK YOUR SOCIAL & COMMS INSIGHTS AND WEBSITE TRAFFIC... AND SHARE THEM PUBLICLY!



SURVEY YOUR ATTENDEES AT EVENTS FOR FEEDBACK ON YOUR EFFORTS, AND SURVEY YOUR TEAM ON THEIR IMPRESSIONS

USE JULY TO CHAT WITH LGBTQ+ ORGANIZATIONS TO GET THEIR INSIGHTS ON YOUR WORK, AND MAKE NOTES FOR IMPROVEMENT!



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Official Partner