

2023 PRIDE GUIDE



BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR PRIDE MONTH

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ABOUT YOU CAN PLAY



 In 2012, You Can Play was launched by Patrick Burke, Brian Kitts and Glenn Witman to directly and effectively address homophobia in sport. Patrick's brother Brendan Burke (sons of NHL legend Brian Burke) made international headlines when he came out as gay in 2009, one of the first D1 college athletes to do so. A few months after he came out and before he could make his NHL debut, Brendan was taken too soon in a fatal car accident. You Can Play was founded in Brendan Burke's honor.



You Can Play lives our mission of ensuring safety and inclusion for all who participate in sports, including LGBTQ athletes, coaches, and fans. You Can Play believes sports teams should focus on the athlete's skills, work ethic, and competitive spirit, not their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

In 2022 the You Can Play Project celebrated 10 years of bringing LGBTQ+ inclusivity to the sports world with events across North America. Seen here is the Baker McKenzie Pride Event held in June in Toronto, Canada.

PLANNING YOUR PRIDE

"Advocacy and Allyship only when convenient is just Marketing"

Impactful Pride celebrations and initiatives take significant forethought and preparation and cannot be cobbled together last-minute. An end-of-May scramble to pull something off can cause your efforts to be seen as

disingenuous or reactive. Get ahead and start planning early. Use the checklist below to see which activities and efforts best fit with your organization.



Gather The Team

Your Planning should begin with bringing your whole team together, not just sticking this to HR or Community Outreach. Gather your folks from your athletes/coaches, Social Media/Comms, Marketing, Outreach, HR, Executive, AND members of the LGBTQ+ community/organizations to make sure your plan is valuable and makes the impact you seek. Do not 'guess' if you plan will help the community, ask during the planning process.

You Can Play is here to help with this planning, just ask!

Set your Pride Goals

All planning should start with the right intentions. What do you hope to achieve within this year's Pride Month? How does this tie into your existing inclusion initiatives or values? What are the outcomes you seek from the work and the relationships?

Do NOT overshoot what you can actually accomplish. Smaller plans that actually get done are better than lofty ideas that never happen. Build over several years.

Put a timeline in place

This is not about posting constantly or doing an event every day of pride month. But planning your timeline of events allows you to announce your plans and show the full ally program you will be running, regardless of how large or small it is. Ensure you are communicating your intentions and then following through.

Social Media & Communications

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

Communicate internally 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.



ACTIVATIONS & EVENTS

There are a number of activations and events that you can do for within the month of June. Be intentional about your activations and consider things you can do on your own and things you can do in partnership with community organizations and events. Below are a number of options - You Can Play is here to help with these events!



Pride Nights/Events

Pride games, matches, tournaments, 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

Parades are a great way to celebrate the community and give your organization a place to connect. It is good to get your own place in the parade for your athletes and staff, or join an existing organization already signed up. Contact your local parade organizer and chat about the opportunity!

Remember, walking in parades can be performative advocacy if it is the only thing you are doing for pride.





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. Providing education internally for your staff and athletes will bring inclusion into sharp focus and set a standard.

Providing external education to coaches, athletes and others in your sport will spread the message far and wide.

Tell Stories

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.

Don't overthink these opportunities...a zoom chat to tell a story can be as effective as an organized multi-person panel



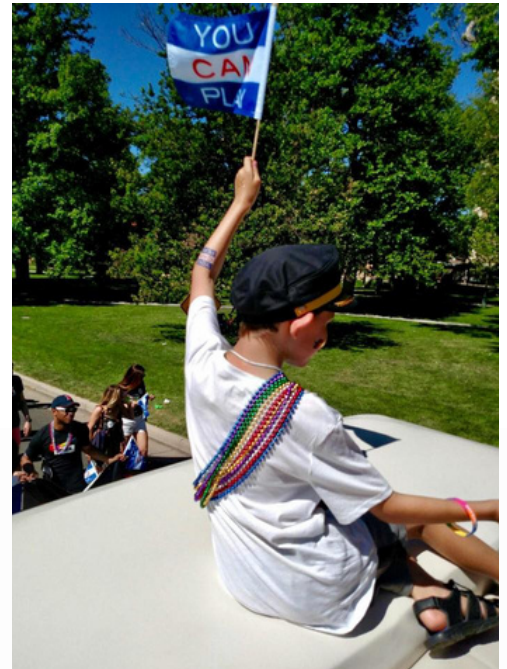
Join an Existing event!

One of, if not THE, best option for June is joining an existing event. Doing your own event is difficult and the LGBTQ+ community already have lots of events and opportunities for involvement. June gets crowded!

It will mean so much to a local organization to have you show up and support.

SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

There are a number of community partners who are worthy of partnership with your organization. Reach out to integrate in their efforts and also involve them in yours. The more reach you have in the community, the more your message and brand as an inclusive organization will be heard.



Potential Community Involvements

- A local LGBTQ+ Community Organization's Fundraiser
- Join a Community Org to walk with them in the Pride Parade
- Pay the fee for a local organization to walk in the parade or have a booth at the pride celebration
- Engage with local LGBTQ+ sport organizations to attend their games or invite them to play in your facility
- Use your Social Media to hype up local LGBTQ+ leaders. Do a series that puts these leaders on a trading card template and celebrates them like sports heroes
- Have your athletes visit a local mental health or outreach center for LGBTQ+ community, they can use volunteers!
- Offer auction items or your 50/50 to a local organization who can use the support
- And so many more ideas!

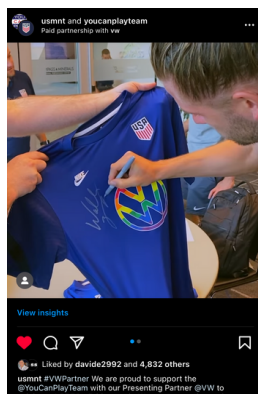
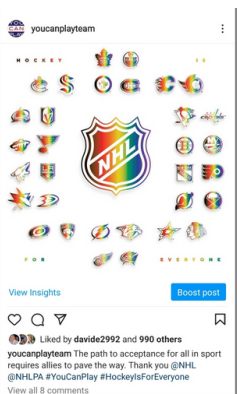
LET'S GET SOCIAL

Social Media can be your best friend or worst enemy when approaching your pride planning and initiatives. Do not make the mistake of popping up a rainbow 'happy pride' on June 1, with no additional follow up, and expect a positive outcome. Please have your full schedule mapped out for the month before it kicks off, and also prepared 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'.

Please do not take pushback as a reason to alter or stop advocating for the LGBTQ+ community. Small groups of loud voices are currently trying to derail pride celebrations. DO NOT allow these extreme factions to stop you from actively welcoming the LGBTQ+ community to your team.

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.



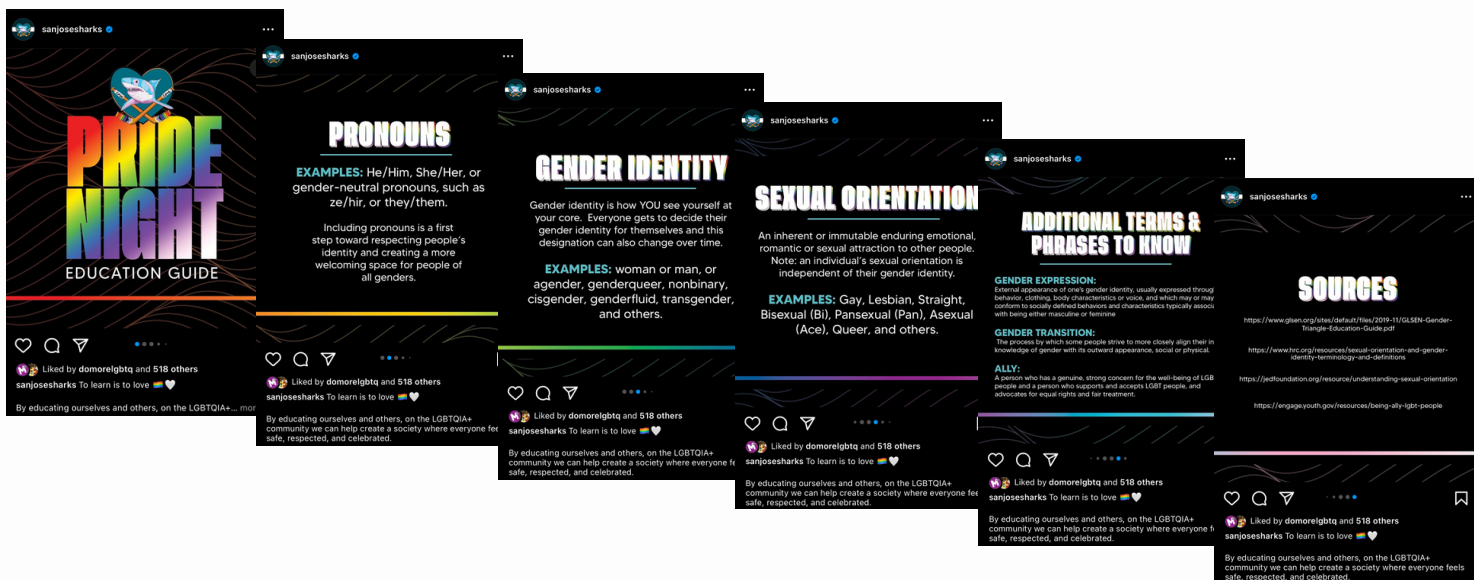
FEATURE YOUR COMMUNITY

Feature a local LGBTQ+ Leader, influencer, changemaker. Make it look like a sport card and hype them up like you would your athletes!



FEATURE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Post information and education to inform your community about the LGBTQ+ community. You Can Play can help you develop these items and ensure you have accurate and



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



VISIBILITY & BRANDING

TO RAINBOW YOUR LOGO OR NOT TO RAINBOW?

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.

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.

'But what if we have never done anything before, should we do this as a first step'? 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.

Most importantly, if you turn your logo rainbow and then immediately ask for a community to buy tickets, merchandise or sign up for something, this will not go well. 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. Ticket sales 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.

VISIBILITY & BRANDING

Rainbows, rainbows, rainbows...

Support in 2023 for the LGBTQ+ community has to go further than a rainbow branding, as the community is seeing increases in violence against it and attacks on our 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 think through what your pride logo should be, and what it should communicate about your values and your support of the LGBTQ+ Community.

Here is an example of thoughtful development of a logo and a story told around that process

SIGNS 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!

Basic You Can Play Banner

Happy Pride Your Team x YCP

Happy Pride - We Support The LGBTQ+ Community



MERCHANDISE

We all love merch, so make something awesome! Again, thoughtful approaches to your merch branding will ensure you are truly attempting to support the LGBTQ+ community over pandering.



T-SHIRTS, CLOTHING, SCARVES, HATS



BUTTONS, STICKERS, BRACELETS, & MORE



LOCAL SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS



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How to donate: [More information here](#)



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