



TEAM SPORT PARTICIPATION

One of the core objectives of Out on the Fields was to determine whether LGB people participate in organised team sports, particularly in their youth. We also wanted to determine which sports LGB people played. If participants said they did not play any team sports, we aimed to determine the reasons. Combined, this information can help us to better understand whether there are any barriers to team sport participation, and if so, how they might be overcome.

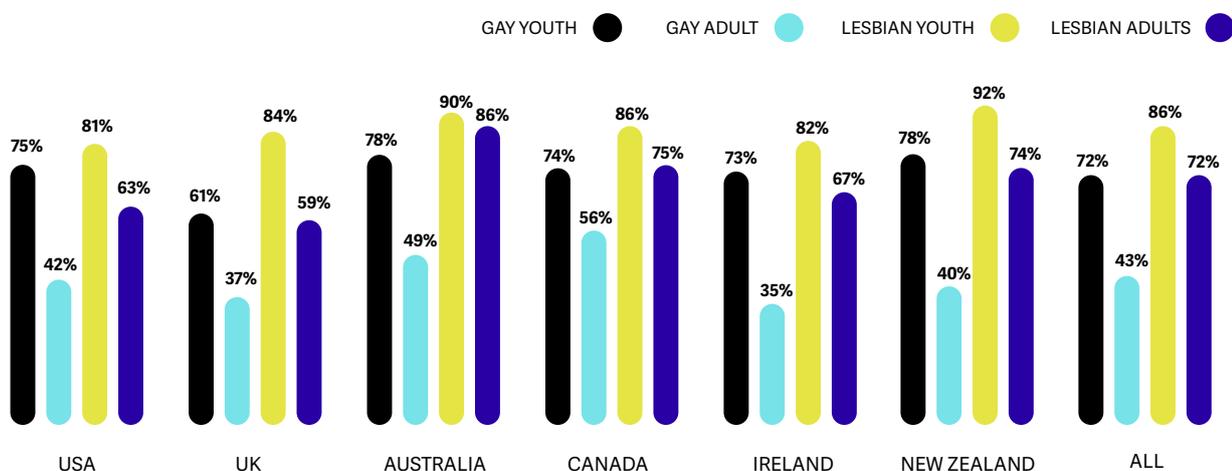
The rates of LGB sport participation, particularly among gay male participants, were higher than expected given previous, smaller-scale studies have found much lower rates of participation. This difference could suggest the Out on the Fields study may have attracted participants who are particularly sports oriented. Alternatively, the results could reflect a more accurate portrayal of sport participation due to this study's size and scope. Either way, while it is a positive sign that so many gay men say they played

HOWEVER, ONE IN FOUR GAY MEN DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN YOUTH TEAM SPORTS, VERSES ONE IN SEVEN LESBIANS.

One of the most positive findings from the study was that the overwhelming majority of LGB participants had participated in organised team sports, particularly in their youth (under 22). In fact, 73% of gay men and 88% of lesbians said they played or are currently playing youth team sports (18% of participants were under 22 at the time of the study). However, the study also found that this rate of team sport participation declined significantly as people grew older.

youth sport, the rates of sport participation also highlight a potential cause for concern. In the general population, men are more likely to play team sports than women. However, the study found the opposite among LGB participants. Lesbians were much more likely to play team sports than gay men. The participation by lesbians is a positive sign that they feel welcome to play sports. However, one in four gay men did not participate in youth team sports, versus one in seven lesbians.

ORGANISED TEAM SPORTS PARTICIPATION*
PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPATION IN TEAM SPORTS



*Male and female bisexual participation was too low in some countries for accurate country comparisons

REASONS LGB PEOPLE DECIDE NOT TO PLAY TEAM SPORTS

Those who did not participate in team sports were asked for their reasons. They were provided with a long list of possible answers or they could supply their own. They could choose multiple answers.

While many participants said they simply had no interest in team sports, a large number also said they were turned off team sports by their experiences in school physical education class and/or they didn't play team sports because they feared discrimination.



HOMOPHOBIC SLURS AND JOKES WERE QUITE COMMON DESPITE A "SCHOOL POLICY" AGAINST SUCH ACTIONS.

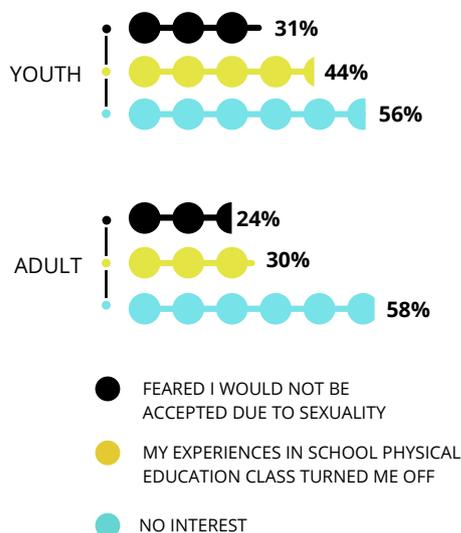
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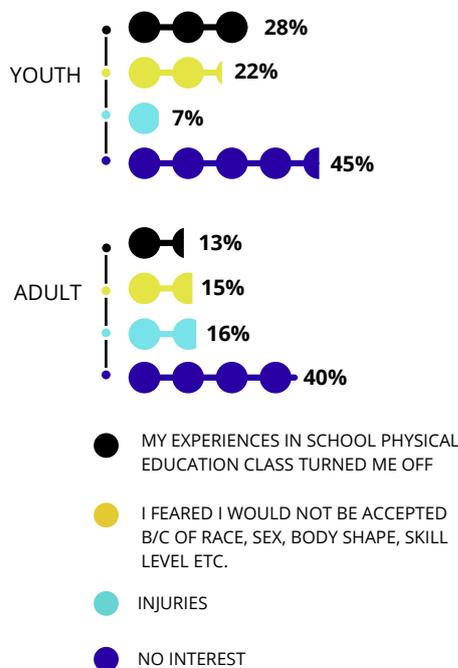
Lesbians were more likely to fear they would be discriminated against due to skill or ability, while men were more worried about discrimination due to their sexuality. This fear of homophobia is particularly evident among gay men in the UK, Ireland and New Zealand, which were the countries with the biggest declines in gay male sport participation between youth and adult.

Engaging in team sports, particular when young, has a very long list of well-established and clearly documented health, social, developmental and psychological benefits. This includes improved self-esteem, ability to work with others, problem solving abilities and communication. This is why it is both encouraging that so many lesbian women are participating in team sports and also concerning that one in four gay men are not participating. Far more concerning is that many cite fears of discrimination or negative experiences in school physical education class as the reason. Although participants weren't asked to explain specifically why PE class turned them off team sports, other studies, such as Australia's Victoria University's "Equal Play Study," found school PE class to be the most hostile of all school

TOP REASONS FOR NOT PLAYING TEAM SPORTS AS YOUTH OR ADULTS: GAY MEN



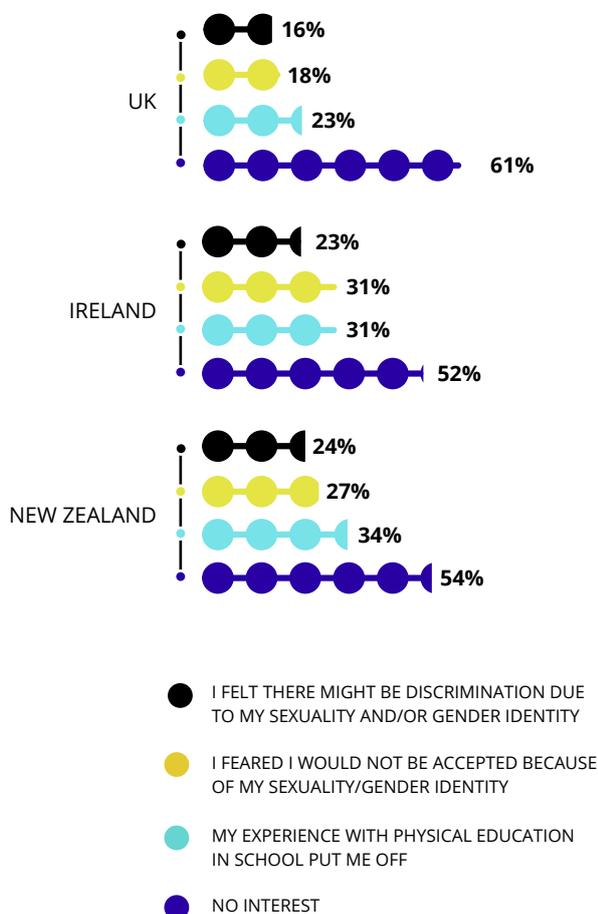
TOP REASONS FOR NOT PLAYING TEAM SPORTS AS YOUTH OR ADULTS: LESBIANS



environments for LGBT students. The study, and others like it, found that experiences in PE class led to serious mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and even suicide. This may shed light on why so many gay participants in Out on the Fields said their experiences in PE class turned them off of team sports.

Finally, it is important to note that the study did not specifically ask participants who said they had 'no interest' in team sports if they instead played individualised sports. However, participants were given the opportunity to provide their own reasons and indeed many did indicate they engaged in sports such as tennis and swimming.

TOP REASONS FOR NOT PARTICIPATING IN ADULT TEAM SPORT
COUNTRIES WITH THE LARGEST DECLINE BETWEEN YOUTH AND ADULT SPORT • GAY MEN



WHICH TEAM SPORTS DO LGB PEOPLE PLAY?

Out on the Fields found LGB participants engaged, at least to some degree, in every single team sport listed as a possible option. Of particular interest, in all countries, a significant portion of participants said they played their nation's most popular team sports, such as American Football and Ice Hockey in the United States and Canada, Soccer in the UK and Ireland and Rugby Union in Australia and New Zealand.

This finding, that LGB participants firstly engage in such a wide variety of sports, and secondly that they participate in the most mainstream sports, should be of particular interest to sport governing bodies. While they may not be open about their sexuality, without exception LGB athletes can be found playing every team sport, and therefore need support from all sports.

Additionally, the findings challenge some prevailing stereotypes about gay men and women. Specifically stereotypes that gay men do not play team sport and in particular, do not play contact or sports considered

to be more 'masculine'. The study found this stereotype to be without merit. In fact, Rugby Union was the most popular sport amongst adult gay male participants.*

IN ALL COUNTRIES, LGB ATHLETES PLAY THEIR NATION'S MOST POPULAR TEAM SPORTS

Equally, there are prevailing stereotypes that lesbians gravitate toward these contact or 'masculine' sports. This was also shown to be without foundation. The most popular sports amongst female participants of all ages were soccer, softball and basketball.

Finally, the study found gay male participants moved away from playing basketball and baseball, which they played in their youth, and as adults they were more likely to play rugby union and volleyball. It is worth further investigation into whether rugby and volleyball are seen by gay men as more welcoming and accepting than other sports such as basketball and baseball.

Most popular sports played by sexuality

GAY YOUTH	BISEXUAL MALE YOUTH	LESBIAN YOUTH	BISEXUAL FEMALE YOUTH
SOCCER 40%	SOCCER 47%	SOCCER 46%	SOCCER 34%
BASKETBALL 26%	BASKETBALL 34%	BASKETBALL 40%	BASKETBALL 33%
BASEBALL 20%	BASEBALL 27%	SOFTBALL 30%	NETBALL 32%
GAY ADULTS	BISEXUAL MALE ADULTS	LESBIAN ADULTS	BISEXUAL FEMALE ADULTS
RUGBY UNION* 20%	SOCCER 22%	SOCCER 34%	SOCCER 21%
VOLLEYBALL 19%	SOFTBALL 21%	SOFTBALL 24%	BASKETBALL 16%
SOCCER 17%	RUGBY 19%	BASKETBALL 16%	NETBALL 15%

* Although the Bingham Cup, the world cup of gay rugby, is the lead partner of this study it's unlikely this had much, if any, impact on the study results, in particular the findings around the popularity of certain sports. This is supported by the fact many more gay men play rugby union in the United States than any other country, however, rugby does not appear in

the top 4 most popular sports played by American male participants. Furthermore, sporting organisations of all kinds helped promote the study, including the Federation of Gay Games at the Gay Games 9 and numerous national sporting organisations such as Football Federation Australia as well as athletes, such as Australia's national cricket vice captain.