



First Olympian Comes Out as Transgender Man

**Editors: Trans rugby players available for interviews in Canada, USA, UK, and Australia.
Videos and images at the bottom**

- Ellia Green came out during an opening address at the Bingham Cup's international summit on ending transphobia and homophobia in sports: www.binghamcup.com/summit
- The rugby superstar represented Australia in women's rugby sevens and won Gold at Rio and a Silver medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games
- He called for an end to the serious harm being caused to children from the politicization and misinformation surrounding trans people in sport (full transcript below)
- New research from Canada, the UK, and Australia was also released which found most women's rugby players do not support banning trans women from their sport

Ottawa, August 16 - Ellia Green is the first Olympian to come out as a transgender man. He represented Australia playing women's rugby sevens for nearly a decade. He began his transition after he retired in 2020.

"I promised myself that when my rugby career ended, I would continue to live the rest of my life in the identity and the body that I that I know I am meant to be in," said Green, who lives in Sydney, Australia with his wife and newborn child.

He continued: "Being open about my gender identity is a really difficult thing to do these days. All you have to do is turn on the TV, look on social media platforms, and you can see the amount of bullying, harm, and discrimination that goes on about gender identities. It's extremely harmful, so for someone to be open and honest about their identity to the public eye is absolutely daunting."

Green said his biggest concern is the decision by sport organizations, including World Rugby and FINA, to 'ban' trans women and girls from participating in sport "Imagine not being able to do what you love because of how you identify, banning transgender people from sport, I think is disgraceful, and I think it's hurtful. I think that the alarmingly high rates of suicide and the mental health challenges which trans and gender diverse youth experience will get even worse."

Green's views are supported by research presented at the Summit which detailed the urgent need to find effective solutions to improve the mental and physical health of trans and gender-diverse children and young people.

Professor Elizabeth Saewyc, from the University of British Columbia's School of Nursing, was one of the presenters. "We are very concerned about the health of trans and gender diverse young people and need to do everything possible to support them, not ban them from playing sports. Trans young people have poorer health than their peers across nearly every health indicator. A main contributor is the harmful discrimination and stigma they experience at school, when playing sports, and in the general community."



Prof. Saewyc presented joint research conducted by UBC and Monash University (Australia) which collected data at 7 large rugby clubs in Canada, and 14 clubs in Australia and the UK. The study, supported by British Columbia Rugby, Rugby Australia, and professional rugby teams (Toronto Arrows, Melbourne Rebels, and the Harlequins in the UK) examined the attitudes of rugby players around the participation of trans people. The research found:

- 87% of heterosexual rugby playing women in Canada, who were surveyed, supported full inclusion of trans women in their sport vs. case-by-case rules or banning them from sport;
- 80% of women disagreed with the statement “I would feel ‘unsafe’ playing with a transgender woman” (safety is the rationale for bans from rugby), while just 4.5% ‘strongly agreed’ they would feel unsafe;
- 16% of men and women have heard others use transphobic language at their Canadian rugby club, while an alarming 57% have heard sexist slurs used at their club (e.g. b*tch) and 22% have heard homophobic slurs (e.g. fag).

The President of Bingham Cup Ottawa 2022, Jean-François Laberge, said:

“Ellia’s bravery in sharing his story will save lives and it will also shake-up the sporting world. To have a trans Olympic Gold Medal winner in rugby is groundbreaking and I think it’s going to help challenge and dispel many of the myths about trans people in sport. Over the last two years I have spent a lot of time speaking with and listening to women who play rugby. The research which was presented confirms what I had been hearing from women, that they are opposed to people being banned from playing their sport and there is no evidence that trans women are a safety risk to others.”

Contacts and background

Contact (monitored 6am – 10pm Ottawa): media@binghamcup.com or +1 (613) 703-6300

Fact sheets, research summaries, and releases: www.binghamcup.com/media

Transcript of Ellia’s talk: <https://bit.ly/3QsixDc>

Full video on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3C8NdVO>

Full video in Dropbox – please credit Bingham Cup Ottawa 2022 when embedding:
<https://bit.ly/3QqUEvN>

Pictures of Ellia with wife Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts and newborn daughter Waitui (Credit Ellia Green): <https://bit.ly/3w5X0Io>

Instagram: Ellia: <https://www.instagram.com/elliagreen>