



Date: 05.08.2022

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett

V.P External Relations,

[Adrian.hyyrylainen-trett@gaygames.net](mailto:Adrian.hyyrylainen-trett@gaygames.net)

Phone Number: +44 7801290193

## **TRANS EXCLUSION FROM THE WORLD OF RUGBY, RFL AND RFU CONDEMNED BY THE FGG AND INTERNATIONAL GAY RUGBY (IGR)**

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, USA, 05 August 2022

Another sport, another saddening change of stance from a formerly trans inclusive sport. The Federation of Gay Games is having to condemn again another set of professional sporting bodies for its exclusive and trans regressive policies in light of exaggerated claims by gender critical individuals and groups on sex-based rights to ban trans people from competing in Rugby.

Verity Smith, a transgender Rugby player, and member of FGG EDI Committee commented on Twitter regarding the decision that “Rugby can no longer say they are inclusive or a sport for all. None of the Council Members from the RFU came out to tell the people it affects what the outcome was”, it has left Verity saying the decision is an “absolute disgrace from a sport that I have loved for 31 years. Time to hang up my boots why should I be allowed to play as a trans man but no trans women”.

The statement from the International Gay Rugby (IGR) couldn’t be more scathing as it “condemns the ban imposed today by the RFU on Transgender Women playing rugby, and the additional barriers put in place for Transgender men.

“We feel that the RFU has not provided evidence on how they have engaged in any form with the world’s leading organisation for LGBTQ+ rugby or with those individuals who are to be most directly affected. The Claims by the RFU that this is supported by research are misleading at best, and could be better described as deliberate distortions of complex and inconclusive research”.

Their statement continued saying that “this ban will not encourage any trans player to come forward to play rugby. We stand, wholeheartedly, with those members who have been impacted by this decision, and will continue to fight for their right to play rugby.

The FGG’s, Vice President of External Relations, and active Mx, non binary powerlifter, Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett, having competed last weekend at the LGBTIPC inclusive “All Equal” world Powerlifting championships says that, “they are appalled by Professional Rugby stance, at reversing their inclusive gender policy and the harm, hurt and disappointment that trans individuals will face being excluded from their sport of choice”.

They continue, “Noting again that the FGG believes completely in its three core principals of personal best, participation and above all else inclusion, and the fact that this decision was made on such a sensitive topic without any consultation of Trans women, their fellow women professional teams (who have since come out in their support), or even more bizarrely organisations such as the IGR as an (LGBTQ+) advocate organisation within their sport only highlights the lack of thoroughness for this decision”.

The 26 voting members, and two abstentions who wanted to keep their previous trans inclusive policy, shows the vote was hardly overwhelming, and further evidence and consultation should have been considered before this vote took place”, says Adrian Hyyrylainen-Trett.

The FGG firmly believes that all participants should be able to take part in the Gay Games in the Gender category they feel truly reflects their identity.

The FGG acknowledges that only participants themselves can identify their gender, and a participant should never feel left out or forced to take part in a Gay Games competition that does not align with their identity.

### **About the Federation of Gay Games**

The Gay Games was conceived by Dr. Tom Waddell, an Olympic decathlete, as a way to empower thousands of LGBTQ+ athletes and artists through sport, culture, and fellowship. It was first held in San Francisco in 1982. Subsequent Gay Games were held in San Francisco (1986), Vancouver (1990), New York (1994), Amsterdam (1998), Sydney (2002), Chicago (2006), Cologne (2010), Cleveland+ Akron (2014), and Paris (2018). Gay Games 11 will be held in Hong Kong and Guadalajara in 2023.

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