

school team or think a sweeper is someone who cleans the floors," according to Wong. The NetRippers' annual summer tournament is tentatively scheduled for July 1-3, with a location to be determined. The highlight of the season for the club, the summer tournament is a weekend-long engagement with social events bookending competitive play. Wong says the board is working on this year's tournament being a fundraiser for a local nonprofit in the LGBTQ community.

"Every year our tournament gets bigger, and feedback from participants tells us that ours is one of the best and most fun tournaments they go to," says Wong. "We are becoming more involved in giving back to our community through various efforts."

NetRippers currently has coed and men's teams playing at Portland Indoor Soccer (418 SE Main St.) and Soccerplex (8785 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway), plus outdoor men's, women's and coed teams. Rain or shine, the club plays year-round.

"I've developed many great friendships and I always look forward to practice and games," says Wong. "I know I have such welcoming friends and friends-to-be ready to have fun and play some soccer."

Alliances (GSAs) and K-12 athletic departments alike will work together to fill the gap in terms of tools and resources to address homophobia and transphobia in sports and physical education.

"In working with students in local high schools and talking with students at Gay-Straight Alliances, students who participate in sports programs are much more closeted than the mainstream students," says Brown. "Homophobic attitudes among coaches, teammates and peer leaders, and just the general anxiety around the impact that coming out would have on team attitudes and cohesion are all reasons that LGBT youth might not come out to teammates in high school or even college. The new initiative by GLSEN hopes to help start a conversation about how to change those attitudes."

Vancouver, Wash. high school student Brad Usselman, who, along with cross-country friends Benjamin Newcomer and Robert Scott, created a blog in December 2010 detailing their lives as

*Interested in joining up with the NetRippers Football Club? To find out when scheduled practices or games will be held, as well as membership information, visit [netrippers.org](http://netrippers.org).*

—RYAN J. PRADO

### Rolling Thunder

Rose City dominates the derby scene

Roller derby may have started as a scripted form of entertainment, but it has reemerged in the last 10 years as a serious sport with an equally dedicated Portland following.

The Rose City Rollers is the largest roller derby league in the world, with 11 competitive teams (including junior and senior leagues), a training program (Fresh Meat) for aspiring competitive team members and a recreational team for those who just want to have fun.

"It is a common misconception that we fight or throw punches and elbows on the track. Some may remember the version of roller derby televised in the 1960s and 1970s with its staged fights for the entertainment of spectators," says 28-year-old Christine McClane (aka Roller Eclipse), "but today's roller derby is a legitimate sport, and though there is still an entertain-

ment aspect, the action is all real."

ment aspect, the action is all real." Roller derby bouts are divided into two-minute "jams," during which one player (the "jammer") tries to push through the other team's "blockers" to score points. Bouts consist of two 30-minute periods.

While roller derby may not be WWE on skates, it's still physically and mentally demanding. As such, the sport attracts a host of tough ladies, many of them queer.

"I think queer women are drawn to derby for a lot of reasons," McClane, a member of the Guns N Rollers, says. "For one, it is a very open and accepting environment, full of women from all walks of life and different backgrounds, and yet there is a real sense of community. It is a sport where women come first and are valued for being fast, strong and aggressive. It's also a sport where women of any body type can play and be an asset to their team. I think another factor is that derby is outside of the mainstream and has a kind of 'underground' feel, which I think appeals to a lot of queer people whose lives may be outside of the mainstream in many ways."

For more on the Rose City Rollers, visit [rosecity-rollers.com](http://rosecity-rollers.com) or catch them in action April 23 at the Memorial Coliseum (300 N. Winning Way).

—ERIN ROOK

teenaged gay athletes, agrees that the program will help usher in new perspectives on homophobia and transphobia in sports.

"Programs like this can drastically change the school climate," explains Usselman. "It goes directly to a clique that is stereotyped as being homophobic, and to change that stereotype would allow more LGBT students the opportunity to feel accepted as well as comfortable."

Usselman says his Skyview High School track team has been nothing but accepting toward him since he's come out and that he hasn't felt excluded in any way—a positive sign that things may be getting better already. The exposure given Usselman's blog, "Walking the Road: One Common Goal," along with the rise in the number of GSAs in public schools has certainly been a factor in combating bullying in schools. Still, as Presgraves reminds, nearly 9 out of 10 LGBTQ students experience harassment in school each year. When asked what locations on campus they felt most unsafe, the most

common answer was the locker room or athletic field.

The GLSEN Sports Project website features basic game plans for coaches, parents, athletic directors and students, and Presgraves says the word is spreading quickly. Pat Griffin, the project's coordinator, has been at the forefront of addressing homophobia and transphobia in sports for years. Presgraves says Griffin has already attended two school athletics-related conferences to promote the project and support educators and coaches who are interested in utilizing GLSEN's resources.

"We are confident," says Presgraves, "that now is the time when we really can change the game."

For more information on how your school can help implement initiatives through *Changing the Game: The GLSEN Sports Project*, visit [sport.glsen.org](http://sport.glsen.org). To read Brad Usselman's blog, visit [bradrobertben.wordpress.com](http://bradrobertben.wordpress.com).

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