THE YEAR IN

BY RYAN J. PRADO

The sports world as a whole felt bureaucratic and boorish all year long. The NFL lockout that almost was; the NBA's truncated season due to labor disputes; the NBA's playoffs marred by audible, and televised, anti-gay slurs; the Atlanta Braves' Roger McDowell motioning as if he were going to use a bat to assault a pair of San Francisco Giants fans whom he questioned about being gay. On and on it went... It was enough to make you loony. But as with all the settlement. valleys, a peak shouldn't be far away.

Whether the biggest LGBTQ sports story of the year was a peak or valley is up for debate, though.

high-profile lawsuit filed against the North tain that identity." American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA) by three softball players whose GAAA's infallibility. sexual orientation was questioned in the wake of the 2008 Gay Softball World Series in Seattle. The debacle followed the players' team's second-place finish. NAGAAA's rules stipulate that any team competing in a NA-GAAA-sanctioned tournament is allowed pose, plays second fiddle to [this] contro-

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> -JAKE PACKER, FORMER OPEN COMMISSIONER, ROSE CITY SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

only two heterosexuals per team. Following lines declaring more and more professional hearing, the plaintiffs' team, D2 from San Francisco, was disqualified, and the team's second-place finish was stripped.

rules about the straight-player limits in gay sports. Earlier this year NAGAAA changed its policy to include an unlimited number of LGBT players on any team, with the twoplayer limit applying strictly to self-identified straight players.

The players insisted they were bisexual, and the settlement reportedly awarded them reinstatement to the league, and their second-place finish fully recognized. NA-GAAA commissioner Roy Melani argued that the players never answered questions about their orientation during the hearing. Nevertheless, the commish was pleased with

"This settlement and [the] judge's rulings have shown that NAGAAA has the right to define their membership requirements," said Melani. "It's the Gay Softball World Series. A settlement was finally reached in a It's important we defend our right to main-

Others weren't as convinced of NA-

"NAGAAA has a serious image problem," said Jake Packer, former open commissioner for the Rose City Softball Association from 2008-11. "Any message of the good that NAGAAA may achieve, its primary pur-

> versy. The only way to change that is to truly embrace everyone that wants to support the LGBTQ community and gay softball, regardless of their sexual identity."

Anti-gay bullying once again emerged as a cornerstone movement to rally against in 2011, most notably in sports and schools. Scattered head-

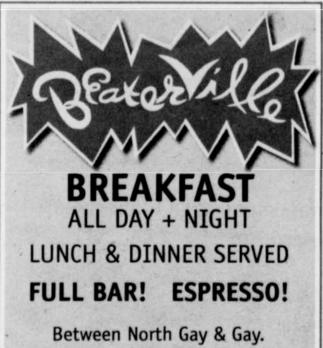
a protest, a hearing was held wherein the athletes coming out ran parallel to news of three players were reportedly questioned an increased number of schools adopting whether or not they desired predominately new bullying policies designed to protect women or men. Following the closed-door students. Leading the charge, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) announced a new program in March aimed at providing a safer and more The lawsuit brought into the limelight inclusive environment for K-12 sports and physical education departments in America's schools. Dubbed "Changing the Game: The GLSEN Sports Project," the initiative was designed to bring together a diverse







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