



Rugby sensation **Ben Cohen** came to town to represent the StandUp Foundation.

coalition of athletes, journalists and sports figures to address and educate on the implementation of measures designed to combat bullying in sports.

Among the facets of the project was the Team Respect Challenge, which encourages sports teams and clubs to make a strong, public commitment to live the values of respect and inclusion for all team members, spanning differences such as race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and religion.

In tandem with that effort this year was the much-ballyhooed work of Ben Cohen, and the establishment of his new anti-bullying project the **StandUp Foundation**. Cohen—known to Americans as either one of the finest rugby players ever to take a pitch, or a shirtless calendar model, depending on your devotion to international sports—retired from the Sale Sharks of the England Rugby Union International in May, rededicating his life to combating homophobia and bullying. The foundation supports the development of its own anti-bullying work, as well as those of groups like the Human Rights Campaign and GLSEN.

"It's been very fast moving, and we're learning a lot," Cohen told *Just Out* in November. The foundation has given away \$50,000 in the first five-and-a-half months of its existence. "The support has been overwhelming. We know that we're really creat-

ing awareness and creating a movement and a following that's helping us drive that cultural change."

Portland LGBTQ sports continued its ascent with the establishment of the **Portland Gay Basketball Association**, as well as the reemergence in popularity of sporting orgs like **Portland's Adventure Group**, whose outdoor expeditions defy the whims of the weather. In 2011, PAG celebrated 25 years of hiking, kayaking, backpacking, bicycling, car camping, huckleberry-picking trips and much more.

Standards like **Team Portland Tennis**, **RCSA**, **Portland Gay Volleyball** and the **NetRippers Football Club**—that's soccer to us yankees—all reported increases in membership. The latter almost certainly received an enormous push by way of the inaugural season of the **Portland Timbers**, Major League Soccer's newest expansion team. Although they didn't make the playoffs—ultimately posting a respectable 11-14-9 record—the Timbers managed to ignite a previously hibernating Portland pro sports contingent. The lines around the Bagdad Theater, coupled with the sight of post-home game, swaying, green-and-yellow garbed über-fans downtown spoke volumes of that.

In 2012, our wish is for active sportsmanship, vibrant competition and a bye year for petty business speed bumps. JO

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