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# Athletes!

As we become older, it's no longer enough to participate for the sake of playing. We need to incorporate our personal identities into our achievements and passions. Perhaps, this is why athletics so often become the battleground between acceptance and alienation. In our very diverse community we hear all too often of what happens to athletes who choose to come out to their peers, which can be an experience of pain. Queer athletes put this much and more on the line when they choose to, or are forced to, come forward. This is why we need to appreciate their bravery, and respect the strength it must take to simply be themselves. Here are just a few local athletes who have risen to this challenge. Their ages, sports of choice, and experience may all be different, but their importance to us is equal and quite immeasurable.