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**ADIDAS ACCELERATING EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN SPORT FOR ALL ATHLETES WITH ATHLETE ALLY, PARTNERSHIP EXPANDED TO REACH MORE FANS, ATHLETES AND STUDENTS**

* *adidas, Athlete Ally and basketball star and advocate, Layshia Clarendon, bring together the sports community for inaugural Athlete Leadership Summit at the University of Miami.*
* *Panel discussions, breakouts and intimate conversations take place to foster acceptance and allyship in sport regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.*
* *Athlete Leader Summit is the kickoff to adidas’ expanded partnership with Athlete Ally to facilitate outreach and workshops at several adidas-partnered NCAA college campuses – a strategic investment and commitment to women and LGBTQI+ athletes.*

As part of adidas’ continued initiative and commitments to push sport forward for all, adidas and [Athlete Ally](https://www.athleteally.org/) hosted the inaugural Athlete Leadership Summit at the University of Miami with special guest, Layshia Clarendon. This Summit comes off the heels of the adidas’ [Title IX news](https://news.adidas.com/athletics/to-celebrate-title-ix-s-50th-anniversary-adidas-signs-15-female-student-athletes-to-nil-deals-and-an/s/fe98aade-0261-4de1-85ef-7e0d5533c7f2) last month and is the kickoff to the brand’s expanded partnership with Athlete Ally – a strategic investment to drive education, policy reform and organization of student-athletes to spur equity on college campuses and across sport.

Later this year, adidas and Athlete Ally will continue this outreach by facilitating workshops at several adidas-partnered NCAA college campuses with the goal of expanding Athlete Ally’s network of college chapters – encouraging fans, athletes, and students to engage in open conversations about fostering acceptance and allyship in sports.

“We are incredibly proud of the work we are able to do with our universities and Athlete Ally,” said **Jeanne Schneider, Director of NCAA partnerships at adidas**. “Through our partnerships, we have been able to help our universities understand how inclusion of the LGBTQI+ community will have a positive impact on the student-athlete experience. Our primary goal is to help them create spaces where all athletes are accepted and celebrated, and we remain committed to supporting them throughout their journey to build more inclusive policies and programs.”

The Summit took place at the University of Miami, an adidas university partner that’s scored a perfect score on Athlete Ally’s [Athlete Equality Index](http://aei.athleteally.org/) (AEI) for the last three years. The AEI is an ongoing assessment of NCAA athletic departments’ policies and practices around LGBTQI+ inclusion, rating universities on a scale out of 100. The Summit brought together speakers and attendees from across the sports community – athlete ambassadors, departments, student-athletes and advocates including professional basketball player, Layshia Clarendon – to discuss progress and future forward in driving inclusivity in sport nationwide.

“We’ve seen significant progress by student-athletes leveraging their power, where now schools are expected to have social justice initiatives as a part of athletic programs,” said **Layshia Clarendon**. “The best thing you can do for an athlete, trans or otherwise, is give them the space and resources to be fully themselves. Continuing to have these safe platforms, progressive policies and open conversations about inclusivity in sport with key stakeholders across the sport community is what will move the game forward even more.”

The weekend consisted of a series of inspiring and authentic panels, breakouts and intimate conversations covering topics like bias and discrimination, activism and issues facing the LGBTQI+ community in sport.

"Through my experiences as a college wrestler and with Athlete Ally, I've seen that the people who need to be educated the most on LGBTQI+ respect and inclusion are actually educated the least," said **Hudson Taylor, Founder and Executive Director of Athlete Ally**. “When coaches, athletic leaders and players themselves are educated about the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ athletes, the importance of respecting pronouns, correct terminology, and how to build a sustainably inclusive team culture through both policies and practice, it makes a tremendous difference.”

adidas and Athlete Ally have been official partners since 2019 as both organizations leverage their respective tools and expertise to champion LGBTQI+ equality in sport.

“Our work with Athlete Ally has been instrumental in how adidas supports the LGBTQI+ community,” **said Ayesha Martin, Senior Director of North America Purpose.**  “Through our partnership, we’ve underpinned purpose and seen the most inclusive Pride Campaigns yet. We have also co-created solutions to expand the reach of the Athletic Equality Index. Now, adidas and Athlete Ally have joined forces for this Summit that demonstrates our shared belief that through sport, we have the power to change lives. We look forward to the future of this partnership and all the ways that we can create change for LGBTQI+ athletes.”

This very-first Athlete Leadership Summit is an expansion of this collaborative support system to equip students and athletic departments with the resources across their teams, on their campuses, and in their communities – a demonstration of adidas’ commitment to its [Own the Game](https://www.adidas-group.com/en/media/news-archive/press-releases/2021/adidas-presents-growth-strategy-own-the-game-until-2025/) and [Creating Lasting Change Now](https://news.adidas.com/creating-lasting-change-now) commitments.

“This partnership and core of my foundation is born of my deeply personal journey and centering trans people around what's needed for the community,” said **Clarendon.** “This next chapter is just the start of the journey we're on together to change the game and there's much more possible to get us where we need to be."

Long after this year’s Summit and workshops come to a close, student-athletes will have the opportunity to continue to be equipped through [Athlete Ally Campus Chapters](https://www.athleteally.org/on-campus/). These Campus Chapters are safe spaces at colleges and universities where student-athletes can come together to create and sustain inclusive LGBTQI+ athletic communities and imagine a more representative future of sport.

“I've heard often from LGBTQI+ athletes that having a supportive coach or teammate completely shifted their experience in sports, by showing them that allies are out there helping to make their teams a safe, welcoming and inclusive place for everyone,” said **Taylor. “**I'd like to see athletic departments working hand in hand with student-athletes to make their programs and policies more inclusive to bring up their Athletic Equality Index scores which comes from examining where the gaps in inclusion are, and how best to bridge these gaps through collaborative support.” which comes from examining where the gaps in inclusion are, and how best to bridge these gaps through collaborative support.”

We believe sport can break barriers and adidas is excited to continue its partnership with Athlete Ally to ensure that everyone is able to play the sport they love, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. This is a fundamental principle to our belief that through sport, we have the power to change lives and push the game forward for all.

“In North America, we recognize the privilege we hold as being one of the biggest sport brands in college athletics,” said **Schneider**. “With that comes the responsibility to put our resources against fulfilling our brand mission, and creating spaces where all athletes can thrive.”

Join the conversation @adidas on Twitter and Instagram using #MoreIsPossible and #AthleteLeadershipSummit.

**About adidas**

adidas is a global leader in the sporting goods industry. Headquartered in Herzogenaurach/Germany, the company employs more than 61,000 people across the globe and generated sales of € 21.2 billion in 2021.

**About Athlete Ally**

As a leading national nonprofit working at the intersection of sport and LGBTQI+ equality and one of the only LGBTQI+ sport social justice organizations in the U.S., Athlete Ally works to end the structural and systemic oppression that isolates, excludes, and endangers LGBTQI+ people in sport.