

## LGBT Pride Month 2015

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month (LGBT Pride Month) is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan. The Stonewall riots were a tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States. In the United States the last Sunday in June was initially celebrated as "Gay Pride Day," but the actual day was flexible. In major cities across the nation the "day" soon grew to encompass a month-long series of events. Today, celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia and concerts, and LGBT Pride Month events attract millions of participants around the world.

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### 2015 USTA NorCal Spotlight

#### Shiv Paul



Shiv is the creative vision behind the [Queens at Court](#) project.

The youngest of 5 kids, he was born in India and brought up in the UK. After getting his MA in French Language and Literature from Glasgow University he decided to be a great star of stage and screen. It didn't quite work out as planned. He worked briefly in London, LA and, lastly, Bombay where he acted in TV, film, commercials and worked as a journalist.

He has lived in Scotland, France, Italy, LA, Bombay and currently in New York with his cat, Chicktoria Beckham. Currently he works for a consulting firm, and as a life coach helping people make changes in their lives by visioning their goals and achieving more balance and perspective

Queens at Court is his first documentary film but he has a feeling it won't be his last. I As he put it, " I never knew why I was so drawn to tennis as a young boy, I just knew that from the time I picked up a racket all I wanted to do was play and if I wasn't able to I would feel heavy and despondent. What I couldn't articulate as a 7 year old boy I can as a 42 year old man.

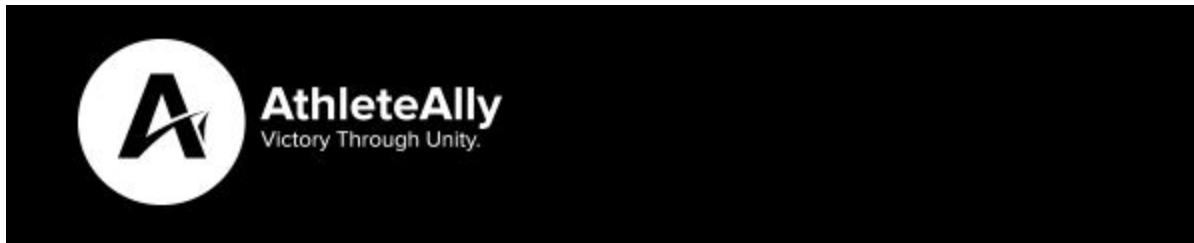
Tennis gave and continues to give me empowerment and self-awareness. When you are in the zone, you are playing with your head, your heart, your soul and your body. It's a meditative experience that lasts for only moments of time. When the point is over there is no time to indulge in whether you have just played a good shot or a bad one because the next point must be played.

In this way it is a good lesson for how life works. Living a balanced, appreciative and conscious life requires self-awareness and focus on the present rather than denial and dwelling on what has happened or what has not.

Tennis has taught me and continues to remind me of this. The LGBTQ sporting community gives me - gives us - comfort and freedom to express this part of who we are.? Studying tennis as life is not what I set out to explore with Queens at Court.

The film was most recently shown at the Sonoma International Film Festival and is scheduled to show at the Citi Open in Washington DC, Rogers Cup in Toronto and at an ATP event in Winston-Salem, NC. Next it will be featured at Frameline39 San Francisco International LGBTQ Film Festival and will be showing on Saturday June 27 at 11am at the Roxie Theater.

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## **The Story**

Athlete Ally is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization focused on ending homophobia and transphobia in sports by educating allies in the athletic community and empowering them to take a stand.

They recruit Ambassadors in youth, collegiate, professional and international sports, who work to foster "allyship" in their athletic environments.

Athlete Ally also provides public awareness campaigns, educational programming and tools and resources to foster inclusive sports communities.

## **Beginnings**

### **Hudson Taylor, FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

As an athlete in high school and college, Hudson Taylor often observed the use of homophobic language and demeaning humor, especially in sports. Soon after enrolling at the University of Maryland, he befriended LGBT students in his theatre classes and became increasingly aware of the pain caused by homophobic behavior.

Hudson, who is not gay, felt it was imperative he confront the reality sports often marginalize LGBT athletes, coaches and others through systemic homophobia and transphobia. He decided to take action as a straight ally to change athletic culture for the better.

To stand in solidarity with the LGBT community, Hudson wore an LGBT equality sticker from the Human Rights Campaign on his wrestling headgear. Though he encountered criticism from his peers, but received positive attention from the media, and received thousands of emails from parents and closeted athletes, expressing thanks and sharing their own experiences of homophobia and transphobia in sports.

This experience inspired Hudson to launch Athlete Ally.

## **Tennis Allies**

### **Martina Navratilova, PRO AMBASSADOR/ADVISORY BOARD: WTA (Retired)**

"Now that Jason Collins has come out, he is the proverbial "game-changer." One of the last bastions of homophobia has been challenged. How many LGBT kids, once closeted, are now more likely to pursue a team sport and won't be scared away by a straight culture?"

### **Andy Roddick, PRO AMBASSADOR: ATP Tennis Player (Retired)**

"Jason Collin's courage and leadership in coming out reminds me of how important it is for an athlete to be able to be true to him or herself. As an Athlete Ally, I want to support every athlete to feel comfortable and confident being themselves and to make sure that all people - players and fans alike - are welcome and included in tennis."