

The Rainbow Griffins Celebrate Four Years of Inclusive Rugby in Canada

The club mark 4 years of building inclusive rugby in Canada with the second annual Rainbow Cup, calling on new players and clubs to join the movement.

TORONTO , ONTARIO, CANADA, October 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Rainbow Griffins](#) Rugby Football Club are celebrating four years of breaking barriers and redefining rugby in Canada. Founded by Ian Royer, with support from Steven Lewis, Richard Yearwood, Jamie Lourenco, Lori McCluskey, and Nate Ives, the Griffins were created to give anyone across the 2SLGBTQ+ spectrum, and other underserved communities a place to belong, play, and thrive.



Players and supporters from the Rainbow Griffins Rugby Club celebrate the 2nd Annual Rainbow Cup Tournament with certificates and smiles after a day of spirited matches and community camaraderie.

“When I started the Griffins, I wanted a space where people like me could show up authentically and belong — no judgment, no conditions,” said Ian Royer, Founder of the Rainbow Griffins. “Four years later, we’ve built more than a team. We’ve built a family that’s changing how rugby feels for everyone who plays it.”

“

Our vision is to keep rugby open, joyful, and accessible to anyone who wants to play. Every player who joins us strengthens that vision, because inclusivity isn’t a slogan, it’s the game plan.”

Laura Armstrong, Club President

Since its founding, more than 100 players have suited up with the Griffins. The club’s impact extends beyond the pitch through a groundbreaking 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusivity Training Program, created in partnership with Rugby Canada, Rugby Ontario, and the Toronto Rugby Union. Led by Dr. Marianick Pichon, with support from Charles Abernathy, Dr. Lauren Wolman, and Dr. John Paul Horn,

the course focuses on transgender inclusion and has engaged over 300 participants in research, with 90 learners now enrolled.

"This course has two objectives. On one hand, it's a myth-buster, based on data and scientific references," said Dr. Marianick Pichon. "On the other hand, it's a window into what rugby means to all of us, and especially to trans players. It shows how easy and practical inclusion can be, and how much of a positive impact everyone can have on the sport they love."

That inclusive spirit came alive at this month's Rainbow Cup, hosted at the Oakville Crusaders pitch, where over 40 players, from first-timers to veterans, came together in a celebration of sport and belonging. "The Rainbow Cup was a reminder of how welcoming and accepting the rugby community is," said Myles Spencer, CEO of Rugby Ontario. "Seeing players try rugby for the first time alongside those with years, if not decades, of experience was inspiring. It was a coming together of people enjoying the best parts of our sport, and it was great to get out and join the play myself."

That spirit was echoed by players whose experiences show how the Griffins are transforming lives both on and off the field. Mokhtar Mimoun (he/him), who joined the club this summer, shared:

"Joining the Griffins and discovering people who truly welcomed me from day one changed my life in Toronto for good. The Rainbow Cup was the pinnacle of that moment, everyone showed so much kindness and respect."

For Elliot Smith, the tournament embodied possibility: "It was a very inspiring day where I felt included and part of a team. I felt like nothing was impossible, that I could achieve anything I set my mind to."

And in the words of teammate Estelle McCalmont: "We all belong. Everyone can play."



Coach Andrew Phillips and player Estelle McCalmont share a joyful embrace after a hard-fought match at the 2nd Annual Rainbow Cup Tournament.



Players from the Rainbow Griffins Rugby Club face off in a fast-paced match during the 2nd Annual Rainbow Cup Tournament.

As the Griffins look ahead, the club plans to expand inclusivity training nationwide with the support of Rugby Canada, while continuing to grow its Toronto community. "Our vision is to keep rugby open, joyful, and accessible to anyone who wants to play," said Laura Armstrong, Club President. "Every player who joins us strengthens that vision, because inclusivity isn't a slogan, it's the game plan."

To learn more, join the team, or take the training, visit www.rainbowgriffinsrfc.ca, follow @rainbowgriffinsrfc on social media, or email info@rainbowgriffinsrfc.ca.

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