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## Gay Sports In Boston

Gay sports in Boston have been flourishing since the mid-seventies when the Gay Recreational Activities Committee (GRAC) began operation. Previously, gay sports existed, but with the exception of the Gay Bowling League, were sometimes isolated and poorly organized. Gay candlepin bowling is one of Boston's oldest and most enduring recreational groups. GRAC instituted a variety of other regularly scheduled recreational sports including volleyball, swimming, and basketball, which were all free and open to everyone. The availability of Boston's Lindemann Center Gymnasium near Government Center was crucial to GRAC's organizational efforts. Recently, the Lindemann gym has been used for non-sport purposes and the gay volleyball and basketball teams have resorted to renting other gyms in the winter and outdoor play in the summer. Swimming has not yet found a new home.

As the teams became more self sufficient and the Lindemann became unavailable, GRAC has folded and the Chiltern Mountain Club has assumed a greater sponsorship role for Boston's Gay basketball and volleyball. Chiltern is a well organized group that sponsors many recreational activities ranging from hiking and camping to bicycling and canoeing. Chiltern has a wide membership in the Boston area and sponsors several outings a month as well as the regularly scheduled sports groups. Over the years several other gay sports activities — golf, tennis, boating, and soccer have been a part of the Boston gay sports scene. They may yet reappear.

One of Boston's favorite organized gay sports is softball. The Beantown Softball League has completed its fifth season and will be sending the Chaps team to the Gay World Series which is being held in San Francisco concurrently with the Gay Olympics. The League has had as many as eight teams and has included a women's team the past two seasons. The Beantown League has won various awards in the past including a second place finish in the World Series and the Canada Cup this year in Toronto.

Recent additions to the local sports scene have been the Front Runners — a gay running group, and the Pleiades — a competitive gay volleyball team. The Front Runners have participated in many running events in Boston and New York and sponsor the popular Annual Gay Run held at the end of the summer on Boston's Esplanade. The Pleiades volleyball team was organized to supplement the existing recreational volleyball team with emphasis placed on regulation play and competition. They are a member of New England's Yankee Volleyball League and play in tournaments around the New England area.

The Olympic Games in San Francisco provide a unique opportunity for Boston's gay athletes to participate in national, even international competition. It is hoped that this landmark event will stimulate even greater interest in Boston's rich gay sports scene.

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