

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Inquiries: [info@lgbtsportsafe.com](mailto:info@lgbtsportsafe.com)

Date: June 22, 2016



## **Groundbreaking Program Encourages College and Professional Sports Leaders to be LGBT Inclusive**

NEW YORK -- In the summer of 2015, after years of helping college coaches and administrators identify ways to translate intention into action to reach LGBT inclusion goals, Br{ache the Silence Co-Founder, Nevin Caple, teamed up with former Nebraska football player, Dr. Eric Lueshen, to conceptualize a new program. One year later, in the spirit of Pride Month, the duo has launched the [LGBT SportSafe Inclusion Program](#) to revolutionize the way college athletic administrators, coaches, recreational sports leaders and professional sports leagues address lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer inclusion.

Caple, who along with Lueshen consults with athletic administrators, coaches and student-athletes across the country, says administrators are seeking ways to engage with student-athletes and staff. "Athletic administrators not only want to continue the momentum, but also increase visibility of their LGBT inclusion efforts while having a long-lasting impact," said Caple. "College recruits and athletic department hires will finally be able to identify inclusive athletic departments right on the department website."

The LGBT SportSafe Inclusion Program uses a new algorithm, the 3-Peat Model, to help administrators understand how to implement inclusive programming, policies and public awareness initiatives within their respective athletic communities. Member institutions that actively engage in inclusion will be awarded a Gold, Silver or Bronze medallion for the athletic department website, a listing in the LGBT SportSafe national registry of inclusive athletic and recreational sport communities, and exclusive access to Coaches Corner, a comprehensive online resource for LGBT inclusion in sports which provides everything from webinars and model policies to discussion forums and best practices for athletic professionals.

The program launches in partnership with the University of Oregon, Northwestern University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "We are thrilled to partner with three powerhouse institutions who are leading the way for LGBT inclusion in sport," said Lueshen. "The tragedy in Orlando reinforces the need to increase the visibility of LGBT inclusive spaces, and it's an honor to have these institutions taking proactive steps to make athletics a place where everyone is valued and respected."

Each partner institution has displayed the LGBT SportSafe medallion at the bottom of their athletic department website and is excited to take a leadership role. "The LGBT SportSafe Inclusion Program provides us the opportunity to further engage in supporting and

showing our commitment to our LGBT family," said Northwestern Vice President for Athletics and Recreation, Dr. Jim Phillips. "As a critical part of our mission to provide a world-class experience to our student-athletes, Northwestern Athletics strives to build an inclusive environment that encourages community members to engage with difference, ultimately ensuring that each individual plays a role in making others feel safe, welcomed and supported."

Oregon Athletic Director, Rob Mullens, expressed similar sentiments, "Oregon is incredibly proud and excited to be one of the launch partners for the LGBT SportSafe Inclusion Program which will help us continue to ensure an environment that is open and welcoming. Our programming, policies and awareness help make certain we remain steadfast in our commitment to an inclusive and respectful department for our student-athletes, staff and coaches who identify as LGBT."

Launch partners and the first two institutions in every athletic conference to join the LGBT SportSafe Inclusion Program are eligible for Founders Club, an elite group of institutions that show an early commitment to LGBT inclusion in sports. "Nebraska Athletics is honored to be an inaugural member of the LGBT SportSafe Inclusion program. This affiliation reaffirms Nebraska's commitment and desire to be a leader in diversity and inclusion providing the very best resources to our student-athletes and staff," said Nebraska Director of Athletics, Shawn Eichorst.

Caple and Lueshen expect the inclusion program to generate interest quickly. Once they solidify their presence in college and professional sports they plan to take the program to high schools. Individuals, including alumni, boosters, coaches and athletes, interested in sharing LGBT SportSafe with athletic administrators and recreational sports leaders, can access the [toolkit](#) on the program website.

"The athletic community is ready for a cultural shift as many of us know or love someone who identifies as LGBT," said Caple. "LGBT SportSafe will help strengthen the entire athletic community as inclusion doesn't only benefit LGBT people, but all of us."

###

To learn more about the LGBT SportSafe Inclusion Program visit [lgbtsportsafe.com](http://lgbtsportsafe.com)