

## Preparing for MLB's First Openly Gay Player

Written by Maury Brown  
Friday, 12 April 2013 13:45

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Whether there has been a change in how society sees it, a change in momentum, or that some athletes have grown weary of having to hide who they are, we are on the cusp of seeing an athlete on an active roster in professional sports admit publicly that they are gay. Fans on either side of the issue can take their stance, but it's not a matter of if, but when. As machismo goes, professional sports may be at its zenith, and therefore when the time comes that a player on the active roster, it will be seen as a watershed moment.

NBA veteran center Jason Collins broke that barrier when he [admitted to being gay in \*Sports Illustrated\*](#)

. It has been reported that four players in the NFL will come out and say that they are homosexual in orientation. The NHL and its players just launched the highest profile initiative by partnering with *You Can Play Project*, an advocacy group that is working to stop homophobia in sports.

So, how will baseball fair? As a sport that now sees movies such as "42" and Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in Major League Baseball, the parallel of breaking societal views on homosexuality is one being drawn. Baseball may not see the *first* openly gay player, but the league is preparing for the day that it happens by working with GLADD, an advocacy group for LGBT people.

"MLB and its Clubs have a working relationship with GLAAD to promote proactive messaging regarding tolerance, and have used in-stadium announcements as a key platform," said league executive spokesperson Patrick Courtney. "MLB and the 30 Clubs will continue to work with GLAAD on a broader campaign."

In some senses, the media covering sports has been ahead of this curve. Whether it is transgenders ESPN's Christina Kahrl, or former Baseball Prospectus sabermetrician turned political analyst Nate Silver, who is now with The New York Times and has recently said he is gay, there has been a shift going on for some time in sports. The difference is how an openly

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gay player is received by his peers within N. America's Big-4 sports. Times may have changed, but there's little doubting that there will be ridicule not only by players on opposing teams, but potentially within a player's own clubhouse. The league will be looking closely at that matter and, as was the case with Robinson and other players that broke barriers prior, trying to get to a point where the focus isn't off the field, but on.

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