



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on January 19, 2023

Will Christian Hockey Player Be the Next Offering Sacrificed to the LGBTQ God?

A Christian pro hockey player has bucked the prevailing trend of celebrating LGBTQ “pride” by refusing to wear an LGBTQ-themed uniform. Ivan Provorov — a defenseman and alternate captain for the Philadelphia Flyers in the National Hockey League — chose not to wear the team’s LGBTQ warmup jersey for Tuesday’s Pride Night.

Provorov, who is a Russian Orthodox Christian, said he “respect[s] everybody’s choices,” adding, “My choice is to stay true to myself and my religion.” And while many Flyers fans, Flyers Head Coach John Tortorella, and even the ultra-woke NHL were able to take Provorov’s lack of rainbow attire in stride, the same cannot be said for LGBTQ activists in media.

As Philadelphia’s CBS 3 [reported](#):

“With Provy, he’s being true to himself and to his religion,” Flyers head coach John Tortorella said. “This has to do with his belief and his religion. It’s one thing I respect about Provy, he’s always true to himself. That’s where I’m at with that.”...

The National Hockey League said in a statement, “Clubs decide whom to celebrate, when and how — with league counsel and support. Players are free to decide which initiatives to support, and we continue to encourage their voices and perspectives on social and cultural issues.”

Philly’s CBS 3 even quoted a fan who — though he seemed dismissive of Provorov’s choice — says he will “definitely be at a Flyers game again.” It is interesting that the headline for that article reads “Flyers fans react to Ivan Provorov’s Pride Night boycott,” but it only quotes one fan, and he appears to shrug the whole thing off.

But that is par for the course for the LGBTQ lobby’s publishing wing (aka Big Media). Because while the NHL, Provorov’s coach, his teammates, and his team’s fans seem to *at least* respect that he made his own choice based on his own religious values, the media have decided that there is a major story of hatred and bigotry here.

Take this op-ed piece from the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#). Penned by the *Inquirer*’s sports writer, Marcus Hayes, the headline sets the tone: “Ivan Provorov shuns LGBTQ+ community as Flyers miss a chance to make a difference on Pride night.” The subhead reads, “Flyers coach John Tortorella should have benched the defenseman. Plain and simple.”



AP Images
Ivan Provorov



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Hayes attempts to have his cake and eat it too by pretending that it is something noble when players refuse to stand for the national anthem, but it is simply evil when one declines to wear a symbol of sexual acts opposed by one's religious beliefs. He writes:

Kneeling protested systemic racism aimed at Black men in the criminal justice system of the United States. Meanwhile, warming up in a jersey with rainbow numbers and nameplates simply supported the right of LGBTQ+ people all over the world to exist without persecution. For anyone, that's pretty simple.

So, let's not complicate the issue. Provorov refused to warm up Tuesday night against Anaheim because he does *not* support the right of LGBTQ+ people to even *exist*. [Emphasis in original.]

He then seeks to teach Provorov about the tenets of his own religion, writing, "This is homophobia at its most extreme. If you subscribe to this belief, you are a homophobe," before delivering this spiritual nugget: "A little rainbow tape on Provorov's hockey stick wasn't going to send him to hell." And just to round it all off, he also states, "Provorov's refusal came from his dedication to an oppressive religion."

Hayes is not the only *Inquirer* staffer to blow Provorov's choice out of proportion while attempting to catechize Provorov and all of us poor, ignorant, misinformed readers about how the *real* gospel is a *gay* gospel. Devi Lockwood — who describes herself as "a queer woman, a former hockey player, a Christian, and an NHL fan" — wrote her piece under the headline, "[Ivan Provorov refused to wear Flyers' Pride Night jerseys because of his religion. He's getting Christianity all wrong.](#)" Her subhead goes further, stating, "If Provorov truly wants to follow Jesus, the best thing to do is to stand up for the vulnerable."

It is less than comforting to have the faith of Christ "explained" by people who would rather mold the Gospel to their perverse lives rather than mold their lives to the Gospel. But one could expect as much from someone who would refer to LGBTQ clubs as "holy spaces."

Lockwood echoes Hayes by pretending that Provorov's choice to *not* do something equates to a positive act of hatred. She quotes the NHL statement, "Clubs decide whom to celebrate, when and how — with league counsel and support. Players are free to decide which initiatives to support, and we continue to encourage their voices and perspectives on social and cultural issues." She then states, "In other words: There's no problem with players being vocally antigay."

NBC News jumped on the bandwagon by insinuating that as a member of the Russian Orthodox Church, Provorov is little more than an agent of a foreign power that is using the LGBTQ issue as a political weapon. David K. Li [wrote](#):

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, a longtime ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin who backs the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine, said last year that Russia must resist liberal foreigners who support "gay parades."

Putin has cynically and successfully co-opted the Russian Orthodox Church and turned gay rights into a worldwide culture war issue, said Fordham University theology professor Aristotle Papanikolaou.

So even if Provorov, 26, doesn't harbor anti-gay sentiments, he might feel pressure to expound such rhetoric, said Papanikolaou, who specializes in the study of orthodox theology.



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“If he has a home in Russia, a family in Russia, he may not have much choice,” Papanikolaou said Wednesday.

This guilt-by-association tactic is a cheap shot; as a faithful Roman Catholic, this writer would hate to be painted with the brush of guilt for every statement issued by Pope Francis. But intellectual honesty is not the media’s goal here. The lesson is simple: Celebrate perversity or find yourself on the receiving end of Big Media’s negative attention. While the Flyers and the NHL have eschewed sacrificing Provorov *so far*, that could change as the negative media campaign continues.



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