

Canadian Strategy for Ethical Conduct in Sport

POLICY FRAMEWORK

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Policy Framework

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Introduction

1. Background

The *Canadian Strategy for Ethical Conduct in Sport* (Strategy) is the culmination of desires from sport communities and governments alike to devote more attention to the wide array of ethical issues that are reflected in sport.

Ethics in sport is not a static state that is achieved with great fanfare and congratulatory rewards all round. It is in fact a dynamic state, which requires ongoing vigilance, analysis and action in order to deal with both situational ethics and sport policy issues. The integrity of sport is intimately tied to the integrity of society as a whole.

This statement from the “Mills Report” (1998) reflects the sport communities’ desire to increase attention to ethical issues in sport. This interest was re-enforced in the consultations held throughout Canada in 2000 and 2001 in relation to the development of the Canadian Sport Policy, in which the following priorities were expressed:

- Ensure that participation in sport is safe and healthy;
- Meet the unique needs of women, Aboriginals and under-represented groups;
- Integrate sport for people with a disability with able-bodied sport;
- Insure that high performance athletes develop holistically, as well as athletically;
- Eradicate doping, violence and harassment from sport;
- Help the sport community deal with disputes and conflict of interest issues;
- Reward good sportsmanship;
- Educate and promote fair play at all levels of participation;
- Develop a relationship with professional sport in order to promote ethical behaviour.

In January 2000, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) presented to the Federal-Provincial/Territorial (F-P/T) Ministers Responsible for Sport, Fitness and Recreation a status report on the current fight against doping in sport. This resulted in the F-P/T Ministers directing their officials to prepare a broader report, in collaboration with the CCES, which would examine the potential roles for the key stakeholders in the struggle against performance enhancing drugs and other unethical practices in sport at all levels.

This direction by the Ministers led to the creation of an FPTSC work group to develop a *Canadian Strategy on Ethical Conduct in Sport* in order to:

- address the F-P/T Ministers’ request for a broader approach to the issue of doping and other unethical practices in sport;
- provide an important element in the emerging Canadian Sport Policy and its F-P/T implications; and
- collaborate with the on-going efforts of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport to spearhead a pan-Canadian initiative.

This work group was co-chaired by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport and Sport Canada and included representation from P/T governments and key stakeholders in the sport community. The efforts of this work group, which reported through the F-P/T Sport Committee, resulted in the F-P/T Ministers' adoption of the *Expectations for Fairness in Sport* at their meeting in London in August 2001 as:

- the initial guideline for a collective and voluntary process of changing attitudes, values and behaviours in sport;
- an appropriate component of the emerging Canadian Sport Policy; and
- the foundation for developing a comprehensive "Canadian Strategy on Ethical Conduct in Sport" in partnership with the key stakeholders in Canadian sport.

The Ministers also directed officials to design, in consultation with the sport community, the Terms of Reference and the related action plan of a *Canadian Strategy on Ethical Conduct in Sport* and to report on progress at the next Ministers' Conference in April 2002. This document is the response to that direction.

2. The Strategy

The Strategy is a comprehensive and collaborative undertaking to enhance ethical conduct in all aspects, and at all levels, of sport throughout Canada. It will address the use of banned substances, harassment, violence, disputes, inclusion issues, organisational transparency and accountability, and the influence of professional sport on amateur sport and society. It will consist of a variety of coordinated and complementary initiatives that are implemented by governments and key stakeholders in sport.

The Strategy is comprised of the Policy Framework and an Action Plan. The *Policy Framework* (Framework) describes the desired outcomes of the Strategy, its various components and its means of implementation. To the extent that it contains a vision statement, goals and objectives, this Framework constitutes a policy on ethical issues in sport. By endorsing this Framework, F-P/T governments are adopting it as their joint policy to address fundamental and topical issues relating to ethical conduct in sport.

The term "Strategy" is used to capture the novelty of this initiative which has been designed by key stakeholders in the sport community with governments, and the recognition that its objectives can be achieved only through the full commitment and cooperation of governments with the sport community. "Strategy" has also been used to convey the orientation towards immediate action.

The Framework has been prepared in collaboration with representatives of Athletes CAN, the Canadian Professional Coaches Association, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport and the Canadian Olympic Committee (formerly the Canadian Olympic Association). The *Action Plan* will describe the implementation of the Strategy and contain initiatives to which F-P/T governments jointly commit.

Policy Statements

1. Vision

The vision for the Strategy describes the desired state of sport in Canada by 2012 resulting from the implementation of initiatives over the 10-year period. It is based on the *Declaration of Expectations for Fairness in Sport* (the *London Declaration*) that was adopted by the F-P/T Ministers Responsible for Sport, Fitness and Recreation in London, Ontario on August 10, 2001.

This Vision is that, by 2012 :

1. There is a firm and public commitment to the principle that lasting and meaningful athletic performance can only be achieved through fair means.
2. Participants in sport and physical activity do so in a manner that adheres to the highest ethical principles.
3. Those who participate in sport receive from their fellow athletes, coaches and officials, and parents/guardians and spectators, fairness and ethical treatment in a safe and welcoming sport environment, free of harassment and abuse.
4. Their sport system advances the widest array of athletic goals of all participants, with or without disability, free from discrimination and barriers based on personal circumstances.
5. Spectators to sport events witness the activities without being subjected to abuse, interference or violence from others.
6. Coaches are appropriately valued by their athletes, and their athletes' parents/guardians and supporters, they receive fair treatment and respect for their valuable contribution to sport, and they are free of harassment and threats of violence under any circumstance.
7. Sport officials are respected for their decisions by athletes, coaches, parents/ guardians and spectators and are not interfered with in the execution of their duties.
8. Sport volunteers are respected and recognized for their efforts to make sport participation possible and rewarding for athletes of all ages.
9. Parents/guardians are assured that their children participating in sport receive fair treatment from coaches, volunteers and spectators.
10. The sport system provides just treatment in cases of disputes in sport and there are proper and accessible mechanisms available to resolve disputed issues through due process in a timely manner.
11. Athletes, coaches and team officials representing Canada in the international sport arena conduct themselves, in both victory and defeat, in a manner that brings pride to all.

12. Sport organizations in receipt of public funding are fully accountable for the use of such resources and are transparent and democratic in their organizational life.

2. Goals

In order to achieve the Vision, the Goals of the *Canadian Strategy on Ethical Conduct in Sport* are:

- To reduce and prevent unethical behaviours in sport;
- To increase ethical conduct in sport; and
- To create and sustain a supportive environment within Canadian sport for ethical conduct.

3. Objectives

The following objectives are designed to guide actions towards the accomplishment of the Goals of the *Canadian Strategy on Ethical Conduct in Sport*:

1. To promote the pursuit of excellence in sport by fair and ethical means.
2. To foster the next generation of value-based leaders in Canadian sport.
3. To elevate the consideration of ethical conduct in sport among all stakeholders in sport so that all decisions are made in the context of a common ethical basis.
4. To engage governments and all sectors of sport communities in promoting a safe, fair and ethical environment for sport for all through the coordinated and collaborative implementation of policies and programs.
5. To establish the recognition within sport communities and the general population that sport is firmly entrenched in a strong ethical foundation as expressed in the expectations for fairness of the “London Declaration”.

4. Principles

The following principles will guide the development of the Strategy. They are particularly important given the Strategy’s evolving nature over the ten year period, and its intent to engage governments and sport communities in a coordinated and collaborative effort towards elevating the ethical foundations of sport in Canada:

1. *Comprehensive approach*, to address the full range of targets, interventions and activities required to succeed;

2. *Phased-in approach*, to enable progress in areas where possible before all elements of the Strategy can be introduced;
3. *Partnership* basis of participation in order to provide the coordinated approach by all government and non-government stakeholders in amateur sport;
4. *Evidence-based and expert-advised* to ensure maximum effectiveness;
5. *Collaborative planning, goal setting and implementation*, to maximize the comprehensive approach to the Canadian Strategy;
6. *Positive approach*, whereby partners rely on positive images and public messages that are supportive and goal oriented; for example: building people, building communities.
7. *Consistent terminology*, to create a consistent theme or brand image;
8. *Reason and fairness*, will be exercised in the establishment of conditions, when such are required;
9. *Sustainability*, in resources and partner commitment, so that momentum can be maintained;
10. *Accountability*, and monitoring of results, by fair and transparent practices by mechanisms accessible to all.

5. Components

In order to effectively impact on ethical conduct, a long-term comprehensive approach will be developed that consists of the following components:

1. *Research*
To add to the current level of knowledge about the nature and extent of unethical behaviours in sport, and thereby support an evidenced-based approach for the development of appropriate interventions, tools and messages for ethical conduct in sport.
2. *Education and Prevention*
To impart knowledge, influence attitudes and promote values that encourage and entrench ethical behaviours, and create an ethical foundation for the pursuit of sporting excellence by fair and ethical means.
3. *Promotion / Communications*
To raise public awareness of ethical issues and engage sport communities and the public in collaborative efforts that bring about lasting social changes in support of ethics in sport.

4. *Coordination*

To foster intersectoral harmonization of relevant policies and programs for ethical conduct in sport, and to support the involvement and networking of many individuals, organizations and partners in the overall strategy.

5. *Strengthening Capacity*

To increase the availability and access of tools and resources that better equip sport communities to implement the Strategy and that foster ethical and values-based stewardship of sport.

6. *Policies / Regulations*

To encourage public and sport policies, rules and regulations that support the development and adherence to agreed upon ethical standards and practices.

7. *International Initiatives*

To take into account the broader context in which sport operates, and therefore seek opportunities to contribute to and to benefit from relevant international activities.

8. *Monitoring / Evaluation*

To assess progress on the goals of the Strategy and to measure the effectiveness of its interventions in order to ensure an efficient implementation and strategic allocation of resources to areas of greatest need and to activities of greatest value.

These eight components represent a multi-faceted, comprehensive approach to the planning, development and implementation of the Strategy. Sustained, positive action taken in all of these areas will help to create a supportive environment for ethical conduct in sport throughout Canada.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Sport communities and the two orders of government are currently engaged in numerous activities including fair play; anti-doping policy, procedures and programs; anti-harassment and abuse initiatives; new forms of fair dispute resolution; anti-violence; and organisational transparency and accountability. The Strategy will build on these initiatives and strive to engage the same stakeholders in the implementation of new and more comprehensive initiatives.

The respective roles of each stakeholder, including athletes, coaches, administrators, sport organisations, governments and the media, will be articulated in a general sense for the Strategy, as well as for each initiative of the Strategy as required.

7. Action Plan

The Strategy will be implemented through initiatives contained in Action Plans which will eventually be of multi-year duration. The Action Plan will consist of fundamental initiatives (such as research in the initial phase) that will facilitate maximum impact of the Strategy over

the ten-year period, as well as topical or emerging issues that arise over the period (such as the modification of the *Canadian Policy on Doping in Sport* and initiatives to optimize the influence of professional sport on amateur sport and Canadian society).

The initiatives will be selected on the basis of strategic and resource considerations in the interest of moving the Strategy forward. They could be process- as well as issue-related. They will be categorized under the relevant component of the Strategy (i.e., research, education and prevention, promotion / communications, etc.), and the objectives, roles and responsibilities, resource implications and targets will be identified for each.

The scope of issues that will be addressed is defined quite broadly to include the wide array of current and emerging issues of concern in sport throughout Canada. These issues are captured under the following titles:

- health and safety;
- fair play;
- doping-free sport;
- anti-harassment and -abuse;
- counselling and rehabilitation;
- anti-violence;
- procedural fairness;
- transparency and accountability;
- management / stewardship of sport;
- equity and access / diversity;
- anti-racism;
- english and french languages;
- athlete centredness;
- environmental sustainability.

Priorities for immediate action include:

1. Engaging key leaders and stakeholders, and the broader sport community, in the design and implementation of the Strategy, including the definition of roles and responsibilities;
2. Performance enhancing drugs and banned substances at every level of the sport system as it affects training and competition;
3. The use of performance enhancing drugs in recreational settings;
4. The growing problem of products related to the unregulated health food and nutrition industry (nutriceuticals);
5. Provincial/territorial affiliation with the national Alternate Dispute Resolution system; and
6. The promotion of ethical conduct in “amateur” and “professional” sport.