Essays on current issues in community sport in Canada
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**Author Profiles**

**Stephen Brunt** is an award-winning Globe & Mail sports writer and commentator. His 1988 series on negligence and corruption in boxing won him the Michener award for public service journalism.

Mr. Brunt has published four books about sport, most recently *Facing Ali: The Opposition Weighs In* (2002), called “a remarkable examination of the nature of celebrity in popular culture.” He recently wrote the narration for *The Last Round* (2003), a National Film Board documentary of the 1966 Ali-Chuvalo fight, dubbed “the Battle of Toronto.” He can also be seen on television, most frequently as part of TSN’s “The Reporters” and TVO’s “Studio 2”.

He was born in Hamilton, Ontario, where he lives now with his wife, Jeanie MacFarlane, and three children.

**Robert B. Butcher** received his Ph.D. in Philosophy (Ethics) from the University of Western Ontario in 1992. As a principal of Foundations Inc., he provides consulting expertise on ethics and values to sport and health organizations such as the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport and the London Health Sciences Centre.

Dr. Butcher taught ethics and philosophy at the University of Western Ontario for fifteen years. His publications include scholarly and practical articles on medical and health ethics, ethics in sport, doping, a textbook on police ethics and numerous articles on ethics for the popular press.

Dr. Butcher coaches soccer to nine-year-olds and spends endless hours watching tyke hockey which is a passionate pursuit for his three young sons.

**Peter Donnelly**, Ph.D. (University of Massachusetts), is Director of the Centre for Sport Policy Studies, and a Professor in the Faculty of Physical Education and Health at the University of Toronto. He moved to Canada in 1976 from England via the United States.

His research interests include sport politics and policy issues (including the area of children’s rights in sport), sport subcultures, and the history of mountaineering. He has published numerous scholarly articles on those and other topics. Recent books include: *Taking Sport Seriously: Social Issues in Canadian Sport* (1997; 2nd edition, 2000), and *Inside Sports* (with Jay Coakley, 1999).

His current sporting interests include rock climbing / mountaineering (continually proving the inverse relationship between age and risk taking), hiking and skiing; he is a novice golfer, and is now enjoying life as an ‘empty nester’.

**Bruce Kidd**, Ph.D. (York University), is Dean of the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Physical Education and Health. As Canada’s premier middle-distance runner in the 1960’s, Dr. Kidd was elected to the Sports Hall of Fame in 1968. He soon turned his attention to activism, campaigning against apartheid and for athletes’ rights. He is a strong supporter of the Olympic movement, educating and encouraging youth to get involved.

Dr. Kidd has published three books, including *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (1996). He has written extensively about the history and politics of sport, both for scholarly publications and for many of Canada’s major newspapers and magazines.

The Bruce Kidd Award is presented annually at the Canadian Sport Awards to a senior national team athlete who has demonstrated athletic excellence and ethical leadership on and off the playing field.
DAVID CRUISE MALLOY, Ph.D., is a full professor of Ethics and Philosophy in the Faculty of Kinesiology & Health Studies and the Assistant Dean in the Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research at the University of Regina.

His research and teaching focuses upon applied ethics and philosophy in administrative, health, and sport contexts. His interests include ethical decision-making, codes of ethics, personhood, and ethical climate/culture. Both the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Canadian Institute for Health Research fund his research.

In addition to numerous published articles and international presentations, Dr. Malloy is the co-author of *Sport Ethics: Concepts and Cases* and *Biomedical Ethics for Health Care Professionals*. He is the chair of *Ethics and Values* for the Commonwealth Games Canada.

He lives in Regina with his wife Valerie and their children Connor, Gaelan, Bronwen, and Brigid.

ANGELA J. SCHNEIDER received her Ph.D. in Philosophy (Ethics) in 1993, writing her thesis on doping in sport. She is an Associate Professor and former Assistant Dean, Ethics and Equity, in the Faculty of Health Sciences, cross-appointed to the Centre for Women’s Studies and Feminist Research at the University of Western Ontario. She teaches, researches and writes on ethics in sport and gender issues in sport.

Dr. Schneider is a member of the Research Ethics Review Board and a member of the International Centre for Olympic Studies at the University of Western Ontario. She is a past President of the International Association of the Philosophy of Sport.

Dr. Schneider competed in the 1984 Olympics (Rowing) for Canada, winning a silver medal. She and her husband, Dr. Robert Butcher, are the parents of four children: Emma 17, Rupert 10, Zachariah 8, and Loughran 7.

ROMAYNE SMITH FULLERTON, Ph.D. (University of Western Ontario), is an Assistant Professor of Journalism at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

With an academic and professional background in journalism, Dr. Smith Fullerton is involved in teaching and research related to print journalism, journalism ethics and media representations of women.

She teaches a variety of courses that explore the function, role, influence, and impact of the media on our everyday lives. At present, she is editing a journalism ethics book that focuses on how Canadian newsrooms make decisions when faced with ethical dilemmas. The topics range from invasion of privacy to public journalism to diversity of voices in the Canadian media.

Away from the academic world, Dr. Smith Fullerton, her husband Greg and their six-year-old son Aidan pursue their family interest in all things equine.

SYLVIE TURNER has many connections to the world of sport. Having practiced a number of team and individual sports at both the recreational and elite level (basketball), Ms. Turner also has experience as a coach and fitness instructor. Her 18 years of experience in sport and leisure have most recently been focused on issues of safety and integrity with the Québec government’s Direction de la promotion de la sécurité (DPS), where she is responsible for the sport ethics portfolio.

For over 15 years the DPS, a department of the Secrétariat au loisir et au sport (SLS), has led the promotion of fair play, supported new models of practice, and become increasingly involved in the prevention of doping, abuse and harassment in the sporting world. Through the DPS’s initiative, an action plan for ethical sport is about to be unveiled in Quebec.
Summaries

Condensed from Realizing the Expectations: Youth, Character, and Community in Canadian Sport

By Peter Donnelly, Ph.D. and Bruce Kidd, Ph.D., Faculty of Physical Education and Health, University of Toronto

Canadians hold high expectations for sport, and the contributions sport can make to the development of children and communities. These expectations drive the enormous investment we make to sport. Yet many Canadians also fear that sport does not always achieve its full potential, and few governments make sport a significant priority.

The Potential of Sport

Canadians state their confidence in the potential of sport in everyday conversations, public assemblies, and letters to the editor. Participants recount the joys of effort and accomplishment, the emotional dramas of competition, lifelong friendships, and the adventures and learning of travel. Parents describe the transformations that sports enable in children. Spectators know the pride sport brings to communities.

Research confirms that athletic participation:

Prevents negative health outcomes. Sport can provide an active lifestyle for children and reduce the health care burden. Exercise promotes bone growth in girls and reduces risk of osteoporosis. It reduces childhood obesity which is linked to heart disease later in life. Universal physical education is necessary to teach children the skills for effective and enjoyable participation, an important factor for continuing with sports and physical activity as they age.

Helps children become more effective learners. In a high school setting, increased physical education time is linked to higher educational aspirations and achievement, especially for disadvantaged groups. Athletic participation makes students more productive, more motivated and better organized. Participation in sport reduces the risk of dropping out at the secondary level, which lowers the related costs to Canadian society of lost taxes, welfare and other social services.

Reduces smoking, drug use, unwanted pregnancy, and delinquent behaviour. Sport provides youth with important leadership opportunities, contributes to a sense of community, and encourages self-discipline.

Enhances other values of citizenship. Athletes take on the role of community representative, learning selfless responsibility. Travel can teach about other traditions, and the ethic of fair play teaches respect for others.

Has a positive effect on psychological health. Sport improves kids’ self-esteem and reduces depression and anxiety.

Creates safe and supportive communities. Sport programs and facilities help communities regenerate by providing opportunities for low-cost, healthy recreation and social interaction. Neighbourhoods with a strong sense of community have less crime, which means fewer young offenders and fewer young victims. The cost of providing these services would be offset by increased property values and the savings from reduced crime.
Such high expectations for sport have a long history. Since Confederation, Canadians have seen inspiring international performances by our athletes stimulate national and local pride. By the late 19th century, many provinces introduced courses in physical education in the new, compulsory public schools; organizations like the YMCA/YWCA created sports programs for middle-class children; and cities built parks and community centres.

The perceived promise of sport was so great that working-class and immigrant families, aboriginal and black athletes, and women struggled to win their opportunity to play. From the National Physical Fitness Act of 1943 to the Physical Activity and Sport Act of 2003, Canadians have affirmed that the benefits of sport and physical activity are a right comparable to health or education.

The Gap between Potential and Practice

The potential benefits of sport are clearly evident. In the 2002 CCES survey, community sport (40%) ranked second only to family (50%) as a very positive influence on youth values; another 52% felt community sport had a generally positive influence. Respondents believed community sports were strongly capable of promoting teamwork (72%) and commitment (63%). Disturbingly, honesty was only endorsed by 41% of respondents.

A gap between expectations and realized outcomes emerged where respondents felt that it was definitely important for youth sports to actively promote positive values and character, but only 19% were very confident, while 62% were somewhat confident that community sports meet these expectations.

Respondents listed the most serious problems facing youth sports today as focus on competition (16%), cost (13%), over- (10%) or under- (7%) involvement of parents, and poor coaching/leadership (6%). When prompted by a list of specific issues, respondents identified as very serious: doping (42%), harassment (38%), intolerance and racism (29%), inadequate facilities (27%), unfair play (21%), injuries (18%) and limited participation opportunities (18%).

The poll results are mixed, showing high expectations and general satisfaction with youth community sports. Yet there appears to be a gap between the potential of community/youth sport to develop character and strengthen communities, and actual experience.

The Challenges and Opportunities

Our failure to meet the three challenges outlined below has resulted in the current crisis in youth sport, and the gap between expectations and reality.

Lowering or removing barriers to participation

Barriers include lack of access, discrimination, social class, disability, ethno-cultural heritage, age, gender, and geographical location. In the 2002 CCES survey, high costs, and lack of facilities, programs and resources were identified as serious issues.

Poverty is the most significant barrier to access. The increasing gap between rich and poor Canadians combined with declining public and school sport opportunities and increasing privatization and user fees, give meaning to the linear relationship between income and participation. Recent analyses of Statistics Canada surveys show that children
Barriers to participation also result from assumptions about the way sports should be played. For example, the focus on elite or professional potential provides fewer opportunities for less talented children. Also, sports based on the professional/competitive model receive the best resources and facilities, which can exclude children who prefer less competitive sports.

How do we lower or remove barriers to participation?

**Infrastructure:** Programs must be affordable or free. Scheduling must take into account the availability of the targeted populations. Facilities must be welcoming and wheelchair-accessible.

**Superstructure:** Policies on equity and harassment have to be implemented. Activities must be designed to involve targeted populations and must respect cultural mores. Leaders and volunteers must have appropriate social, cultural and technical training and must play a key role in policy and program development. All members must voice their concerns and act together to overcome barriers.

**Procedures:** Everyone involved must be consulted and empowered. Support should be provided for isolated groups who need help to participate. Targeted populations must be made aware of their rights and of resources available to them. Initiatives to increase access must take into account the overall living and working conditions of the target populations.

Improving the quality of the youth sport experience

Young people need to be safe, valued, socially connected, economically supported, empowered, and hopeful about the future. Sport programs must serve these needs to contribute to the positive development of participants. In organized youth sports, the major determinants of the quality of the experience are the relationships with adults involved.

**Youth need opportunities for unstructured and unsupervised participation.** The significant growth of youth-organized sports such as skateboarding and ultimate Frisbee points out the inadequacies of adult-organized, structured youth sport experiences. The latter are exclusive and regulated; the former are inclusive and creative. Once we decide when and how adult supervision is necessary (e.g., safety on climbing walls, teaching swimming skills), we can re-imagine a form of children’s sport in which adults take a hands-off approach in the best interests of children.

**Authoritarian leadership may be completely inappropriate for adolescents.** Many young people learn to be obedient, but others struggle for independence and rebel against adult authority. As a result, existing sporting institutions may be squeezing out the very athletes who would ultimately be the most successful. Having a say in the activities (representation) is far more significant than just participation in terms of character and community development. This means sharing power with teenagers, making provision for adolescents’ social needs, and having realistic expectations.

**Youth need opportunities for an unconditional relationship with an unrelated adult.** Sport can...
provide this in a coach or teacher: a great deal of anecdotal evidence regarding young people’s positive sport experiences involves relationships with adults (e.g., “my track coach”).

Volunteers should be models of good citizenship and character for the athletes in their programs. Community sport is largely run by volunteers. To improve recruitment and retention, volunteers should understand how their task fits in with the end goal; they need support, supervision, recognition, and training, none of which are currently characteristic of sport volunteerism.

Parents should balance their involvement. Today’s parents are pressured to know where their children are, and what they are doing, 24 hours a day. As coaches or leaders of youth sports, it is necessary to re-examine the balance between involvement and detachment.

Forging the political will to implement changes

The challenges in youth sports, well-documented since the 1960s, have been made worse in recent years by cutbacks and increased user fees. These challenges are rarely addressed proactively, and when changes come about in reaction to a crisis (e.g., the Speak Out program, a response to the Graham James sexual abuse case) they are rarely implemented thoroughly.

Canada was once the leading Commonwealth nation in sports development, but the federal government has allowed Canada to fall far behind. Provincial governments have cut public and school programs, closed facilities and increased user fees. Politicians claim that their constituents are indifferent or hostile to publicly enabled sport and physical activity.

The lesson from Canadian history is that sport advocates have been most successful when they linked their cause to broader challenges and found a champion in a prominent public figure outside sport. Trudeau promoted high performance during the 1970s crisis of national unity. Chief Justice Charles Dubin led the reaffirmation of drug-free sport in the 1990s during the NAFTA negotiations. Today, sport might be linked to the need to revitalize the health care system, the perceived crisis in childhood obesity, and the need to revitalize the major Canadian cities.

The Canadian sport community has long tried to speak with a common voice. While other attempts have died in infancy, lately the Sport Matters group has effectively brought its views to the federal decision-makers. However, if the sport community’s arguments are not to be dismissed as special pleading, it urgently needs forceful and articulate champions from outside of sport who will adopt the cause as their own. As a first step, coalitions should be made with public health advocates, municipalities seeking urban renewal, and educational leaders concerned about the declining quality of schools. While one arm of the sports community needs to lobby government more strategically, another needs to take its advocacy into the broad community.

For the full text of this essay, see page 25.
All sport necessarily presents moral challenges. Because of the nature of sport – it is rule-bound, performance-driven and competitive – it is not possible to play or teach sport in a “value-neutral” way. These challenges are often posed, and answered, without reflection. However, if the challenges are left unidentified, the solutions that will be arrived at by default may well not represent what we want from sport. The logic of sport itself, the drive to improve performance to compete and win, will lead us to a sport experience that is callous in its disregard for competitors and ruthless in its pursuit of victory.

Sport presents the challenges but it is also within sport that the answers can be found. The logic of sport must be understood in the context of the nature of sports as games. If we articulate and defend the right values, then the ethic of good competition, an outgrowth of fair play, will emerge from sport itself.

The Nature of Sport

Sport is created by people, for people. Each sport has a set of rules which define a made-up goal and describe the means that are allowed to reach it. For example, the goal of golf is to place a ball into a set of cups scattered around a field. A stick must be used to strike the golf ball, the ball must be struck from wherever it lies, and so on. From this, we can see:

The goals of sport stand outside of everyday life. Hitting little white balls into cups with a special club is not something humans need to do to survive. So why do we do it? A small number of people participate in sport for money or fame, but the majority participates because it is fun, and participation is an end in itself.

The rules of sport make the attainment of the goal more difficult. It would be easier to place balls in cups if we lined the cups up on the table and dropped the balls in. In all other everyday activities we tend to choose the most efficient means available to achieve the desired objective, but not in sport.

Because sport is created, it can be changed. We can tinker with the rules to make games more interesting. The rules determine the skills required, and small changes can have far-reaching effects. In ice hockey, for example, skills include skating, passing and typically, body-checking. However, if the game were played without contact, a different skill set would be required.

Sport is competitive. In a sporting contest, unlike in recreational physical activity, contestants compete to see who can perform the given activity better on that day. In most competitions, there is only one winner: if you win, I lose.

The competitive nature of sport means that both sides are striving to win. The goal of sport is that the player or team that best exhibits the skills of that sport, on that day, will win. However, it is possible that through luck, or through cheating, the score may not represent how well the participants played
that day. The rules define the game and make the score the measure of success. But if we break the rules, we cease to play the game, which makes the score, and the entire process, pointless. The great mistake is to imagine that the outcome of “winning” makes any sense or has any value divorced from what made sport fun in the first place: the process of playing.

**Moral Choices in Sport**

In making moral choices we both learn and display our character and values. Sport can be a forgiving environment to explore different moral challenges.

One kind of moral challenge involves knowing what is right. It’s fine to exploit your opponent’s weak backhand, but should you exploit an opponent’s injury? Is there a moral difference between breaking the rules with the intention of accepting the penalty (the so called “good foul”), and breaking the rules intending to not get caught and pay the penalty?

The second kind of moral challenge involves actually doing what we know to be right. This is the problem of right action, and brings out an individual’s character and virtues. There are many examples in sport:

*On Weakness of the Will.* Even when your moral choice is clear, will you have the strength of will to make a call in your opponent’s favour? Other desires may be stronger than the will to do the right thing.

*On Courage.* The virtue of courage requires the ability to assess risks and the strength of character to take them or not. Under-assessing the risk is rash and over-assessing the risk is cowardly.

*On Trying One’s Best.* Competition can instill in athletes of all levels of ability the self-confidence to know that as long as they’ve tried their best, failure does not equal weakness.

*On Commitment and Priority.* Young athletes must decide how to fit participating in sport into the rest of their lives.

*On Relations with Teammates.* Sport can teach the virtues of working together in a common cause. It doesn’t matter who scores, only that the team plays as well as it can. This can mean accepting the skills and weaknesses of others and sacrificing personal glory for the good of the team or sport.

*On Relations with Coaches.* The athlete-coach relationship allows young people to learn how to learn. This is a powerful but potentially dangerous relationship. Trust and emotional intensity leave open the possibility for abuse. Is the athlete ready to leave ego behind to learn, and still be able to evaluate the actions of coaches and others?

*On Relations with Opponents.* We need our opponents to play well to get what we want – a well-played game. It may be better to lose a tightly contested, highly-skilled game than to win against a lesser opponent. In contact sports, the respect due to a co-competitor is essential, or contact sport becomes just a fight.

In each of these areas of moral choice, a belief that victory alone is the goal would powerfully influence your decisions. Strategic advantage would be the guiding principle in deciding what is the right action. If you happen to be winning, your best is no longer required. If victory is all that is important, teammates are tools and opponents are enemies.
In contrast, if victory is valued only as an indicator of better play, then the focus is on the game itself. Valuing sport for its own sake (or respecting the game) is also a powerful determinant of behaviour. To decide what to do, you ask which action would be better for the game if all participants adopted it. If the best player wins a cleanly contested, highly skilled game, all players win because all have experienced sport at its best. Teammates and opponents become necessary colleagues in a joint pursuit of good sport.

**The Other Players in Community Sport**

Parents come to sport for their children’s sake, and often are pressed into volunteer roles of coach or fundraiser. As coaches, they are often untrained and face inconsistent demands. Is their job to provide a sporting environment where young people can flourish or is the objective to win? All participants in sport have a role in ensuring we get sport right.

*Separating Outcome from Process.* Not just athletes, but all participants can go wrong by separating outcome from process. Coaches, parents and spectators need to show athletes (and to model, through their behaviour) the idea that winning is inextricably linked to the process of playing well.

*Being Unrealistic.* We can be unrealistic about the importance of a play or a game or even sport itself. What matters in community sport are the life skills each child learns through participation.

*Being Inconsistent.* Perhaps our biggest failure is failing to match what we do with what we say. Parents may espouse participation, then want only the best kids to play in the playoffs; or claim to support the referees, then verbally abuse them.

**The Sport We Want**

Why be moral? Why follow the rules? It can’t be only fear of the consequences, as quite practically we won’t always get caught, and ethically we would only be motivated by self-interest. Fear may bring the right action, but it does so for the wrong reason.

Athletes should perform the right action for the right reason. Fair play as respect for the game provides a theory for working out what the right action would be, and a motivation for performing it. Right action flows from a love and respect for sport.

Sport is fun! For the player, it brings the joy of movement and of learning and mastering new skills. It provides comradeship and shared commitment, as well as the chance to test ourselves against others. From the parent’s perspective, sport offers a means of enjoyment and personal growth for their children. The enjoyment of sport, if harnessed, brings with it the motivation to play well and compete fairly.

Sport both presents moral challenges and carries within it the seeds of their solutions. Within sport is a set of tools, grounded in the love of sport itself, which can be used to teach athletes how to compete fairly and to the limits of their ability, for their lifetimes. But there are choices to be made.

The primary objective in sport cannot logically be victory alone. But, if we do not want sport that is solely about outcome, and if the default tendency is to view it that way – what will we do about it?
If the primary objective of community sport is not victory, what is it? Is it the enjoyment of sport for its own sake? Should we simply insist that community sport be conducted fairly, and then let participants gain the lessons they can from fair sport?

Or is the primary purpose of community sport the development of character? Should we structure it explicitly as a tool of personal and social development to produce the maximum beneficial effects?

What is the sport we want?

For the full text of this essay, see page 45.

Condensed from Understanding the Nature of Ethics, Values, and Purposes of Business, Health-Care, and Law: Implications and Applications for Community Sport

By David Cruise Malloy, Ph.D., Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, University of Regina

The cause of any behaviour is a result of values, purposes, and ethical knowledge or ignorance. These three components and their interrelation have received relatively little attention in the debate to improve the state of sport. In other sectors, such as business, health, and law, the role of ethics has been much more thoroughly examined.

The fundamental question in ethics is what should I do? There are three perspectives when making ethical choices. In means-oriented ethics the answer relies on the principles behind our behaviour – “the means justify the ends” and the outcome of our behaviour is less important than how we behaved. Ends-oriented ethics emphasizes the consequences of our action – “the ends justify the means” and the manner in which we perform the action and our intentions are secondary. The third perspective is that the answer is driven by an individual’s freedom to choose what action to take with full responsibility for the outcome.

While ethics tells us what we ought to do, it does not explain why we do it. Why we behave in any one of these three perspectives is based upon what we value. Values move us to act in a particular way and if a value does not cause us to act, then we can conclude it is not valued. Values can be defined as core (always result in action), intended (may result in action if circumstances allow it), adopted (action is based upon pressure by others), and weak (discussed but not acted upon). A value can be instrumental to another value – a person may value jogging because it is instrumental in leading to health. Or a value can be terminal as an end in itself – a person may value jogging simply for its own sake.

The purpose of a sector or an organization is based upon its instrumental and terminal values. For example, the purpose of a school is to teach because education is valued.

In the business, health and law sectors there are generally three formal means by which ethical behaviour is encouraged. Codes of ethics set internal guidelines for individual behaviour and also serve as a mechanism to inform the public of the profession’s intent to be ethical. Models of ethical decision-making provide more specific guidance for ethical dilemmas. Ethics education is a common means to present and encourage ethical behaviour, but the
existence, form, and content of ethics education vary dramatically within the sectors.

**Business**

The purpose of business is to make profit based upon the terminal value of economic wealth. The ends-oriented emphasis on profit has been a chronic concern for clients and the public. The business sector has responded by placing more emphasis on ethical means to profit. Recent research suggests that over 85% of businesses in Canada have an ethical code of some form. However, the extent to which they are effective is a continuing debate. A major drawback is the lack of professional sanctions (other than what is enforceable under law) for business people who act unethically – codes of ethics function without “teeth”.

Business has shown great interest in the development of decision-making models to help individuals make better ethical choices. These models focus on the process to be followed to make an ethical decision, or the variables that influence the process, or both. Presumably those that follow the models will make better ethical decisions but there is little evidence of their wide spread use.

One of the most obvious success stories in the business sector regarding codes of ethics and organizational behaviour was the Johnson & Johnson Company’s reaction to tainted Tylenol capsules in 1982. Consistent with the company’s ethics credo, they immediately removed 32 million bottles of Tylenol at a cost of $100 million. In stark contrast, the Ford Motor Company decided in the 1960s not to recall Pinto cars and trucks with a defect that could cause the vehicle to explode upon rear-end collisions, and instead to absorb the lower costs of lawsuits.

**Health Care**

The purpose of the health care sector is to provide treatment for individuals based on the terminal value of health. The degree of trust expected from health care professionals is immense. To maintain the trust society confers on this sector, each of the health care professions in Canada has established a code of ethical conduct. For example, the Canadian Psychological Association’s code includes principles, value statements and standards of conduct. The Association also provides a ranking of the principles. For instance, respecting patient privacy can conflict with making patient information public to benefit society, but the Association ranks respect for the dignity of persons above responsibility to society.

To varying degrees, codes of ethics and ethics education form part of the academic requirements of nurses, physicians and psychologists. The use of models of ethical decision-making to reinforce codes is also part of the educational content for many health care professionals. This sector has a captive audience for ethics education and adherence to codes – failure to follow the particular code can mean losing professional status.

**Law**

The purpose of the legal sector is to uphold the law based on the terminal value of a just and ordered society. The means to accomplish this purpose is full knowledge of the law through the educational requirements for all members of this sector. In Canada, the extent to which ethics is a mandatory aspect of the legal profession’s educational curriculum
varies from province to province and university to university.

While specific ethical codes of conduct operate as secondary sources of guidance in this sector, the legal professions, like those in health care, are bound by professional obligation to be aware of and adhere to their particular code. Unethical behaviour is reason to be disbarred from the profession. An additional and effective resource for lawyers is to send written briefs of ethical dilemmas to their law society’s publications and request other lawyers to respond and give guidance.

The nature of values and purposes differs dramatically from one sector to another. As a function of these differences, there is variation in the manner by which ethical conduct is enhanced and maintained. The ends-oriented business realm relies on ethical decision-making models in order for individuals to respond to ethical dilemmas; it employs codes of ethics to a lesser extent because of the lack of professional accreditation across this sector. The health care and legal sectors, by virtue of their professionalization, rely heavily on codes of ethics and provide, to a greater or lesser extent, educational opportunities that require that members of the professions are aware of and understand the code. These means-oriented professions demand adherence to profession-specific guidelines that are self-sanctioning and self-defining.

**SPORT**

There can be little similarity of purpose and values among sub-sectors in sport. Unlike professional sport, community sport’s purpose and values are much more complex and ill defined. There are numerous core, intended, adopted, and weak values in sport and confusion about what values are instrumental and what are terminal. For example, if the value of winning is terminal then the maligned belief that one must win-at-all-cost seems to be justified. This confusion over values leads to a wide range of perceived purposes, such as financial profit, a source of entertainment, a medium for fitness, an avenue for social interaction and intervention, a tool to promote patriotism, personal development, or simply as the natural act of play.

Using codes of ethics in sport would not be a new strategy as they have existed for quite some time in a variety of sport contexts, from administration to coaching. While the form and content of these codes vary dramatically, the similarity among all is that they are not enforceable and act only as guidelines.

Currently there are only a few models of ethical decision-making developed in sport contexts. Adapting such models from the business sector to the sport context would generally be a positive step to help individuals make better choices.

Ethics education in sport is rare at the curriculum level in universities and also at the volunteer level. For example, the National Coaching Certification Program offers Leadership and Ethics as one of 20 modules in its level 4/5 while there is no mandatory component in levels 1 through 3 – the levels of community sport.

Codes, decision-making models and ethics education need to be designed with values and purposes in mind to be fully effective. The first step is to identify community sport’s terminal values (or real good) and its
instrumental values. The core values must be distinguished from the intended, adopted, and weak values.

Because the demands of inner city youth sport programs in Montreal and Halifax will differ from programming on a First Nation’s reserve in Alberta, each community must explore its own values. Community sport leaders should perform “value audits” of their particular settings, and every parent involved has the ability and the responsibility to consider and express what they believe should be the value, purpose, and the ethical climate of the sports in which their children participate.

These values must then become part of the natural day-to-day policy development and decision-making processes of community sport programming, aims and objectives. In addition, the messages communicated to the athlete/child must be consistent with and support these values.

For the full text of this essay, see page 59.

Condensed from The Changing Face of Sport: From Hometown Heroes to Supermen and Superwomen

by Stephen Brunt, Author and Journalist

Any examination of spectator sport, the way it is relayed through the media, and the effect of the resulting message in terms of values and ethics has to begin with a question: why do we care in the first place? What is it about watching others compete that is so compelling as to have become the underpinning of an industry that rivals Hollywood?

The king’s ransoms paid to our most famous athletes are a direct reflection of our passion for the games they play, and of the audience those games can deliver to advertisers. The sports audience is committed, engaging through long seasons, year after year. Without that engagement, the entire pyramid comes tumbling down.

In its original, organic form, the link between the audience and the athlete was a simple matter of community affirmation – and by extension, self-affirmation. Players were friends or neighbours, or at the furthest remove, strangers who came from the place you called home. They would have grown up in similar circumstances, not separated from their community as teenagers because of their athletic talents. Gathering to support them was a shared, collective purpose, like church or grassroots politics, the act of being part of a larger whole, and among those who share a common set of beliefs or interests. To celebrate one of our own athletes was to celebrate core values. If your town’s team beat the team from down the road, it was an opportunity for self-celebration, for asserting your place in the universe.

Growing up in Hamilton 40 years ago, our self-image was of a working class community, our fortunes shaped by the steel industry. Those values were embodied in the Tiger-Cats, the rough, tough football team whose very style of play seemed to mirror the city’s self-image, especially when matched against the hated Toronto Argonauts, the embodiment of big city elitism. When the Tiger-Cats won, we won.

Meanwhile, the bigger, American-based league games were rarely broadcast. The connection remained unchallenged between a community
and its team, without the sense of big league envy that has become so prevalent. And because it was possible to connect real life with athletic heroism, it was also possible to believe that through hard work and perseverance, one could achieve as one’s heroes had.

Clearly, the need remains great for that sense of shared commitment that comes with gathering together to care about the same thing at the same time as hundreds or thousands of others. There are precious few opportunities for that kind of mass passion and common language in the modern world. The decline of organized religion and the prevailing cynicism about politics has chipped away at what were the dominant mass belief systems. Spectator sport has an appeal that extends far beyond the pure entertainment value of the two or three hour contest.

But though that bond remains intact, the relationship between athletes and fans has been perverted. There is a marked disconnect between sports as it is experienced through television, talk radio, and the sports pages, and the recreational pursuits of those who do not possess world class, big league skills. They are no longer “us.” They live in a rarefied world of wealth and privilege.

The irony is that they became less like us purely because we cared so much, because our passion was transformed into billions of dollars – the bulk of it falling into the hands of a few superstars and their employers. The distortion of values begins with distorted needs, with the fact that at no time in human history have spectator sports filled such an enormous void. We need them very, very much, and so we have made them rich.

The world has changed. Now, all games from all leagues are available, no matter where and when they take place: true hometown loyalties have become nearly irrelevant. Elite athletes are identified before their teen years, and learn their trade entirely separated from recreational sport. And though we still tend to ascribe to athletes the values that have always gone with the pursuit of excellence, the notions of playing to the edge of the rules and beyond, sacrificing everything for the sake of victory while disdaining any place lower than first – and publicly humiliating those beaten along the way – have become the accepted norm.

Commercially driven values now overtly dominate professional sport. A great professional athlete is a rich athlete, whose contract negotiations and lavish lifestyle will be nearly as much or more a part of their story as what they accomplish in competition.

And just as Hollywood stars are forgiven the kind of behavioural lapses that destroy careers and lives in the real world, professional athletes seem to operate under a different set of societal rules. A general sense of being above the law goes with the territory of stardom.

It’s quite a life. And if performance-enhancing drugs, for instance, might make it more possible to move into that elite sphere, just how would the risk/benefit analysis work for someone who believes that they’re on the brink? If there really is that much money at the end of the rainbow, what role would education play in the life of a young, promising athlete? If cheaters often prosper, just how great is the temptation to stray beyond the bounds of fair play?
The attitudes of professional sport inevitably filter down into community sports, producing consumers of sports entertainment, not participants. They elevate the few with elite potential, turning seasonal sports into a full-time job, and discourage the rest long before they reach their teenage years, as they come to understand that hard work and perseverance are only part of the equation. They divide the attention of coaches and administrators between creating recreational opportunities for the broadest base possible, and developing the elite athletes of tomorrow – however statistically unlikely that is.

We often see behaviour lifted straight from the “role models” of the big leagues. The coach screaming at kids from courtside. Officials being challenged by young athletes. Athletes bending the rules trying to gain an advantage. They’re all simply emulating their heroes, following the established path to success. Top athletes are rich, famous, and privileged: the message is that success can be achieved by any means necessary, and the risks are worth the rewards.

Counter-messages are also available in the media through amateur sport. Though the Olympics have been known for scandal and corruption, they are still the one place where the good try is celebrated, where the organic connections between community and sport and achievement can still be embodied in a Clara Hughes or Daniel Igali. The mainstream media provides blanket coverage of amateur sport during the Olympics, but generally much less at other times.

However, the press reflects, rather than drives, cultural trends. Expecting advocacy in the sports pages, or on network television, betrays a basic misunderstanding of the business. With limited resources, the bulk of coverage is devoted to those sports entertainment products which interest the largest number of people, creating the largest audience and the largest revenue. That’s a commercial reality that has been in place for the better part of a century, and will not change.

Through the devotion of some reporters and editors, the heroes of amateur sport do find their way into the sports pages on a regular basis, but will never displace coverage of the minutiae of the Leafs, Flames, and Senators. The media do not have an obligation to change attitudes and provide balance.

That said, fundamental change is coming as professional sports are in the process of collapsing under their own weight. Growing fan indifference, empty seats, labour disputes, and bankruptcy are evident in every league. The new generation of fan has no firm loyalties, and judges a game purely on its entertainment value. Professional sport is faced with the frightening prospect of shrinking in a hurry. No one knows what lies at the end, though it may be a world in which the gap between professional athletes and the rest of us has been somewhat narrowed.

Still, there remains that great need for a communal experience. And it may not just be wishful thinking to believe that the public may turn towards something more modest, more community-based. The big sports certainly aren’t going to disappear. But as they struggle to adapt to changing circumstances, there is the real possibility for the first time in a long time that fans might be willing to look at something different.
Consider this short case study. The Canadian Football League was on the verge of extinction in the 1990s after a period of expansion that couldn’t be sustained. Player salaries couldn’t be supported by revenues as fan interest plummeted, and two teams were forced out of business. Then, a subtle shift in public taste brought Canadians back to a familiar game, increasing television ratings and even resurrecting one of the failed teams. Could it be a reaction to the overly packaged, expensive major league events, or a return to sports entertainment that feature homegrown athletes that earn middle-class wages? The ongoing decline of the professional major leagues and the rising fortunes of the more modest, community-linked CFL, suggest a growing niche both for smaller professional events that fall just below the elite level, for Canadian college sports, and for other endeavours that had fallen out of favour or been ignored.

For those who have long hoped that sport can return to a more holistic role in the community, that there might be more of a balance between the professional world of millionaire athletes and our real lives and real values, an opportunity is at hand.

For the full text of this essay, see page 80.
proportions of professional versus amateur coverage, and offers some idea of the range of diversity (gender, colour, disability, region). Four newspapers were surveyed: a national newspaper (*The Globe and Mail*), a French language provincial newspaper (*La Presse*), a large metropolitan daily (*The London Free Press*), and a community weekly (*Journal Argus, St. Mary’s, ON*). One week was chosen randomly from each season from spring 2002 through winter 2003, with the 2002 winter Olympics deliberately excluded as not representing what Canadians see on a regular basis. Evidence from television news and sports broadcasts, as well as both public and private radio, are included in the discussion in a more general way.

**Content Analysis Findings**

The vast majority of national mainstream media coverage is about professional sports. The metropolitan daily paper and TV station offered 30% coverage of amateur sport. The community weekly focused almost exclusively on local sports, profiling professional athletes only if they were originally from the area.

Most stories, professional and amateur, are ‘hard news’ stories that cover winning and losing. The process of the game is divorced from the outcome. The top themes are winning, money, ownership, coaching and game-winning skills. Statistics and scoreboards take up significant amounts of space, giving the impression that scores, standings and outcomes matter most. These stories give little background or discussion of other aspects of the game.

The weekly local paper tends to report community sport with an emphasis on skills and game chronology with the outcome near the end of the story. The effect is that while winning is obviously important, being skillful, playing your position and supporting your team are also part of the community news agenda. The effect of reading about the games in this manner is that winning is not as emphasized and the process is more evident than when scores are reported first.

Columns or opinion pieces are largely about pro sports and usually follow the same theme as hard news: winning. The vast majority of columns (at least 25:1 ratio) in the bigger papers are about professional sport, and themes focus on winning, money, ownership and athletes’ skills. Sportsmanship as a theme only came up in reference to plays that resulted in scoring or injuries – plays that directly affected the outcome of the game – in both professional and amateur sports. Commentary writers could open a larger discussion around issues relating to fair play, the value of competition and the merits of integration of sport and community, but this rarely occurs.

For a variety of reasons, media coverage is not diverse. Sports pages and television broadcasts are still sexist, largely white and dominated by able-bodied people.

Although women are participating more and more in sport, in our sample the focus was exclusively on women only 7.5% of the time. Photos of women tend to be tightly framed headshots, not action shots, often in the ‘Briefs’ section. On television, more women are appearing on the sports desk, but the charge that they are being hired for their looks is often made. The implication is that Canadian women and girls are more to be ‘looked at’ than admired for their athletic abilities, and their accomplishments are less worthy.

From the perspective of colour, athletes of African and Spanish descent appear regularly on mainstream television. This coverage can
demonstrate to Canadian kids that in the world of pro sport, colour doesn’t matter, and success is not dependent on being white. However, professional athletes of colour represent only about 11% of the overall total of pro photos, which is undoubtedly low. Even less acceptable is the low number of people of colour in amateur photographs (about 3%). First Nations, people of colour and athletes with disabilities are underrepresented in pro sports coverage and they are virtually invisible in local stories and photos.

Athletes with disabilities are similarly invisible in news coverage. In the television broadcasts, only footage of able-bodied athletes was shown, and only 0.5% of the 2461 stories surveyed mention athletes with a disability. The impression is that coverage of athletes with a disability only occurs during a major tournament like the Paralympics or because they play in a unique way.

Arguably part of the media’s mandate is to represent its communities to themselves and to each other. While La Presse is very good at playing up Quebec athletes, in general, The Globe and The Free Press don’t often note a player’s hometown except in a ‘once-local athlete does well’ profile. The impression is that urban Canada matters most and that sports aren’t played in any organized fashion in the North or on reserves.

**The Larger Implications**

The purpose of professional sports coverage is not to encourage participation but to entertain, and its values are different from those fostered in community sport. However, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between sport played for its own sake and sport that is packaged for sale. The inordinate emphasis on final scores, and the packaging of sports highlights divorce the outcome from the process. The essential factors of the plays often become lost or are not mentioned in the coverage. Because of the influence of entertainment values in sports coverage, there are numerous instances where games become opportunities for broadcasting musical performances, parades, soap opera style profiles and other material unrelated to athletic pursuits.

The purpose of media coverage of pro sport is to deliver audiences to advertisers. Media outlets devote significant time and resources to sport coverage. Both advertisers and the media know their target audience for sports is men between the ages of 18 and 40.

Professional sports coverage is big business. It has become an integral part of the entertainment industry and embraces the same values: conflict, aggression, violence and winning at all costs. Sport is easily used for the purpose of entertainment because the pursuit of athletic excellence is entertaining, a contest filled with challenges, risks, violence, victory and defeat. The win comes at any cost: there is not much media condemnation of the use of performance enhancing substances, and players that choose to play despite being injured are rewarded with flattering coverage.

It’s clear that being a winner means money, popularity and national celebrity. Through media exposure, athletes are commodified and used as tools to win. While athletes are on top of their game and winning, they are valuable sales tools for large corporations who transform them into celebrities through endorsements. Athletes become role models because of their athletic achievement, but as
celebrities their behaviour off the field becomes news. Questionable personal values and unethical behaviours can become accepted as part of the equation.

Sport language is not neutral. Some contests like football and hockey are hyped as “masculine” pursuits, while others like curling are considered less important and “feminine.” Military terminology normalizes aggression and devalues skills, sportsmanship and fair play. The “sharp shooters” and “snipers” take shots with “laser-like” precision; they “batter,” “annihilate,” and “trample” their opponents. This type of talk indirectly supports violence and excludes discussions about fairness, participation and skill.

One word that is noticeably absent from all the sports coverage is “fun.” While most people agree that playing community sports is supposed to be fun, the term “fun” appeared only once in all the coverage surveyed, and it was used in a sarcastic manner.

Local sports are played in a broad context and that environment is one that’s largely created by media coverage. In general, the media set the parameters for the discussion and have an impact on ideas, attitudes and behaviours. And in many cases, local sports are framed in nearly identical ways to professional stories. This implies to our youths that the issues are the same. So while we might want to separate professional from community coverage, or say that we see pro sport but live amateur, the distinction is simply not that clear.

For the full text of this essay, see page 88.
10 or fewer penalty minutes. The total number of points determines how the teams are ranked. A team that neglects either performance or conduct jeopardizes its chances of success.

Franc Jeu promotes respect of self, players, officials, and the rules of the game. It aims to reduce injuries and intimidation, thus attracting and retaining more young players. The program helps coaches become educators and mentors. Overall, Franc Jeu enhances hockey’s image in the eyes of parents and the public.

The hockey sector finds that Franc Jeu improves the quality of play and reduces violence, offences and therefore injuries. It is a flexible, inexpensive, and easy-to-apply program. On the negative side, there is little support to manage and develop the program, and a lack of tools to evaluate its success.

To ensure that Franc Jeu is no longer a marginal way of playing hockey, Hockey Québec made it mandatory for 75,000 minor hockey players for the 2003 season. Some parents, coaches and players still need to be convinced that hockey played without violence and with a greater respect for the rules remains “real hockey.”

Québec’s evaluation shows that Franc Jeu teams have a 20% decrease in the number of penalties called. However, some players might be adapting their play to break rules that are less apt to be called by the referee, such as holding instead of roughing or hitting. Are we teaching players to circumvent the rules instead of helping them learn sportsmanship? How can we restore the power the official must have without giving the impression that the official “controls” the match?

The simplicity of the Franc Jeu model would make it attractive to other sports that seek to reduce violence and re-establish the value of sportsmanship.

CASE 2: FAIR PLAY IN MINOR HOCKEY

The Dartmouth Whalers Minor Hockey Association (DWMHA) Fair Play program aims to create a positive recreational experience in a safe and fun environment. It is based on respect of opponents, officials, and the rules; and maximizing participation. The program was created to address increased suspensions and injuries, unequal playing time, and disrespect for others.

Under the DWMHA Fair Play program, players, coaches and parents sign contracts emphasizing their rights and responsibilities. Pre-season meetings and pre-game announcements promote Fair Play. At each game, a parent completes a team assessment and officials complete a referee assessment. Fair Play signs are posted in arenas and awards are given to teams that demonstrate Fair Play principles.

New procedures for coach selection and dispute settlement were introduced, as well as a new program aimed at recruiting junior officials. In the DWMHA, unlike in the rest of Canada, there aren’t enough officials positions for all the applicants, and none have dropped out due to verbal or physical abuse. The program’s success is linked to substantial financial support; participant interest; proper coach selection; and reaching key target audiences, especially coaches. The DWMHA was committed long-term to the program, and put it into action in the field. Financial support of the provincial government, sport organizations, foundations, local businesses
and the media, enabled the program’s launch and promotion, a participant survey, a website and a manual.

The Fair Play program was phased in over seven years, growing with the original participants as they moved up through the divisions.

Many believe that respecting Fair Play reduces competitiveness and can compromise success, but in the first five years of the program, the DWMHA won more provincial hockey titles than in the previous ten years. It appears their desire to win is intact, though it is a big stretch to attribute their success to the Fair Play program. A 40% drop in suspensions indicates fewer illegal plays, less violence, and an assumed drop in injuries (30% of injuries are caused by illegal plays).

The Fair Play program has been adopted by other minor hockey associations in Canada and around the world. In addition, other sports, such as baseball, soccer and squash, have used the DWMHA model.

**CASE 3: DYNAMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH**

Engaging in a sport can prepare us for living in society. Dynamic Opportunities for Youth (DOY) is a national rowing program designed to make the lessons and benefits of sport more accessible to youth at risk. Ideal candidates are youth aged 12 to 18 who have good attitudes but few opportunities in life. Rowing is used to teach positive values and a healthy lifestyle, focusing on themes such as self-esteem, teamwork, personal challenge, discipline, and fair play; and not on competition.

The program originated in Victoria, BC in 1998. It has expanded to offer 270 selected youth a free ten-week session at one of 14 rowing centres across Canada, sponsored by Dynamic Mutual Funds.

Implementation consists of finding the right participants in schools and outreach centres, hiring and training instructors, and carrying out the technical rowing and life skills sessions.

Coaches are selected based on leadership and communication skills, not technical skills, and are briefed on the special needs of at-risk youth. They help youth interpret the lessons and apply them to their daily lives. Although discipline and personal challenge are emphasized, the instructors must not pursue performance goals at all costs, and should guard against violence, doping, and lack of sportsmanship.

The program has some critical elements. Access must be free with transportation provided. A community committee is needed to guide the program, and school authorities are needed to identify at-risk youth. Instructors must have excellent skills and should be well paid. And participants must enjoy themselves!

The concept would lend itself to other sports if victory and scoring are de-emphasized, as youth at risk seem to avoid competition. It could also apply to other age groups, with age-appropriate themes.

It is difficult to know how the program measures up against its stated objectives, as it is hard to verify whether the skills have been integrated in the youths’ daily lives. All counselors say self-esteem, teamwork, and/or discipline have improved within their groups. Improvements are also seen in school attendance and scholastic achievement. The
young people themselves are satisfied to have learned through concentration, determination and teamwork.

The DOY program has been successful in expanding its reach, promoting itself, obtaining media coverage, and involving its partners and the community. It should either find a way to measure whether it is meeting its primary goal, or establish secondary goals that are more easily measured.

**Case 4: Kugluktuk High School Athletics Association**

In 2001, the Kugluktuk High School Athletics Association (KHSAA) was established. Kugluktuk, Nunavut, is a community of 1300 people, 600 of them under the age of 20. Teachers and coaches were concerned by delinquency, drug/alcohol problems, and high dropout and suicide rates in the community.

The KHSAA enables youth to participate in sport, and also uses sport to keep youth in school. Its mission is to promote sport, improve lifestyles, and provide stability. All members have to meet minimum standards of school attendance, attitude and behaviour, and must lead a healthy lifestyle.

Coaches and teachers had students participate in every part of the project, knowing that a feeling of identity instills pride and reinforces team spirit. The students created the KHSAA Grizzlies name and logo, which was displayed and promoted throughout the school. A banquet was held to honour the athletes, and awards were given out for distinctions such as Athlete of the Year and Best Attendance.

Through bingos, dances, sales of a line of clothing, and an arcade run by KHSAA members, they raised $83,000 in 2001-2002 and sent 75 students to tournaments outside the region. The program also relies on substantial funding and widespread voluntary participation of coaches, teachers and administrators.

As their feeling of involvement increased, students became addicted to meeting high but attainable expectations. They were becoming successful athletes and students, and their self-esteem increased substantially. A recent member survey shows that 85% felt they had become better people, and the top benefits were increased school attendance and more involvement in sport. There has not been a single completed teenage suicide since 2001.

Since sport in this example is being used to improve life choices and increase school attendance, sport itself is not changed, but must be kept free of violence, drugs and abuse. The philosophy could be extended to any other sport.

One of the biggest hurdles was convincing young people who have little self-worth to adopt the concepts of team spirit and a healthy lifestyle.

The KHSAA proved that the program serves the community’s well-being by supporting its other causes and consulting with the Band Council. The mission must be constantly reaffirmed, ensuring people’s support and staying open to their input.

The KHSAA offers valuable solutions for the community’s problems. The link between program participation and behavioural changes should be evaluated. Are they lasting changes? Can they be attributed exclusively to the program?
Other Program Examples

The JustPlay program helps sport associations recruit and retain officials. Officials fill out cards after each game, rating the behaviour of coaches, players and spectators towards the officials.

The Adapted Gymnastics Program allows children with disabilities to experience the benefit of participating in sport in the community setting, and also increases appreciation of their abilities.

The Goulbourn Aquatic Club’s alternative swim program supports the pursuit of excellence free of pressure and harassment. The club promotes fun, democracy, and a strong sense of community.

Programs that provide financial or equipment support can help include more youth in sport. The KidSport Fund and Sport Yukon’s Kids Recreation Fund provide money for young people to be able to participate. Sport Central in Edmonton lends underprivileged youth hockey, softball and biking equipment.

Conclusion

Initiatives aimed at getting the most out of sport’s formative potential arise from two objectives.

The first type (Cases 3 and 4) uses sport as a source of life lessons. These programs seem to fulfill a need, and have a positive impact on lifestyle choices and behaviours off the playing field.

The second (Cases 1 and 2) tries to change negative behaviour in athletes and the people around them. It is important to balance introducing new rules with respecting the sport’s nature and culture. Success depends on involving coaches, officials and parents, and staging events in the community.

In all types of program, financial and volunteer support is essential.

Some people believe that sport naturally serves as a vehicle for education, health and sportsmanship, but the fact is these values aren’t automatically transmitted in sport. It all depends on how sport is encouraged, managed, taught and practiced.

For the full text of this essay, see page 102.
Realizing the Expectations: Youth, Character, and Community in Canadian Sport

Peter Donnelly, Ph.D. and Bruce Kidd, Ph.D.,
Faculty of Physical Education and Health, University of Toronto

Perhaps the saddest comment I have heard from some hockey officials is to the effect that the disease in amateur hockey is a natural consequence of a sick society. Why, they ask, try to cure it? How, they argue, can you overcome dollars, greed, the mass media and a society growing more violent and permissive each day? Amateur hockey is only one part of sport. How can you reform one sport in a world moving in the opposite direction?

William McMurtry (1974)

Canadians hold high expectations for sport, and the contributions sport can make to the healthy development of children and youth, the values of citizenship, and the sustenance of safe, supportive communities. These expectations drive the enormous investment individuals, families and communities make to sport, and the support they provide to athletes, teams and leagues. Yet many Canadians also fear that sport does not always achieve its full potential in developing individuals and communities, or contribute in positive ways. Certainly few governments make the public provision of physical education and sport a significant priority, with the result that public opportunities fall far short of the expressed needs.

This paper examines the contributions Canadians expect sport to make to youth development, character and community, and the fears and concerns they hold about the shortcomings of sport. It also identifies three major challenges that must be examined if sport is to realize its full potential. As the opening quote from McMurtry suggests, these issues are not new; and they cannot be addressed in isolation. The challenges can only be met in the full context of Canadian and world society.

The Potential of Sport

Most Canadians believe that participation in sport and physical activity can bring significant individual and social benefits. This belief is confirmed by their own experiences as athletes, coaches, parents and spectators. Participants recount the joys of effort, the emotional dramas of competition, the satisfactions of self-mastery and accomplishment, the lifelong friendships, and the adventures and learning of travel. Parents describe, and take pride in the transformations that sports enable in children. Spectators demonstrate the attention and pride that sports bring to communities, whether they be small clubs and schools or large, diverse cities and regions.

Research confirms the extent of these pleasures and transformations, and
expresses them in the form of utilitarian benefits. For the purposes of this paper, these benefits can be summarized under three headings: preventing negative health outcomes, realizing the positives in health and education; and creating safe and supportive communities.

**PREVENTING THE NEGATIVES**

Sport has become the most popular form of physical activity for children and youth today. As such, it can be invaluable in preventing the negative consequences of inactivity. There is mounting evidence, particularly for coronary heart disease and hypertension, that these diseases have their origins in childhood and adolescence. Of greatest concern is the increasing prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents, as post-modern societies become more sedentary and parents become more protective. The research shows that all-cause mortality and coronary heart disease mortality are significantly elevated in relation to overweight during childhood (Must and Strauss, 1999).

A physically active lifestyle for children can reduce the health care burden indirectly – through the prevention, management, or treatment of obesity, which is associated with an increased incidence of adult coronary heart problems and other diseases. Through the schedule of training and competition, sport provides a regular, intensely demanding form of physical activity. Appropriately conducted, sport can provide children and youth with the required physically active lifestyle.

**REALIZING THE POSITIVES**

Regular physical activity can play an important role in children’s physical, emotional and educational development. Exercise may be more important than milk to bone growth for girls. Physical activity during adolescence can reduce the risk of osteoporosis later in life. Of course, to ensure that children are physically active, they need to be encouraged and taught the skills necessary for effective and enjoyable participation. The development of adequate skills is an important factor for people enjoying, returning to, or continuing with sports and non-competitive forms of physical activity as they age. Universal physical education is thus necessary to provide these skills to all children (Malina, 2001).

Participation in sport and physical activity may encourage children to stay in school longer and help them to become more effective learners – no mean contribution in a world where frequent social and economic change places a high premium on the skills of learning and adaptation. From the studies available, we can assert with confidence that increased time spent on physical education and sport in elementary schools is not detrimental to academic performance, and may well be positively correlated with
improvements in subjects such as mathematics. At the high school level, athletic participation in the educational setting enhances academic participation. The academic performance of student athletes is equal to or greater than that of non-athletes and, in general, athletic participation is positively associated with increased educational aspirations. More importantly, the relationship between athletic participation and enhanced academic achievement is even stronger for students from disadvantaged groups (Sallis et al., 1999).

It is important to understand what seems to be happening in the course of these multifaceted experiences. Physical activity and sport at the primary and secondary levels may not make students 'smarter', but it seems to make them more 'productive', i.e., more strongly motivated, better organized, and more effective in learning and performing tasks. These are skills and attitudes that may be readily transferred to other social roles. From an economic standpoint, productive students are more likely to become productive adults. Not only does athletic participation enhance academic achievement, but it reduces the risk of dropping out of school at the secondary level. The Conference Board of Canada calculated that the nearly 137,000 Canadian youth who left school instead of graduating with the class of 1987 cost Canadian society $1.7 billion in 1992 alone due to lost taxes. In the United States, it is estimated that high school dropouts cost $240 billion a year in lost earnings and lost taxes. These figures do not include what this group costs taxpayers for welfare, crime control, and other social and remedial services (Kidd, 2001).

With the self-discipline and development encouraged by sport, participating children and adolescents are less likely to be involved in 'deviant' social behaviours. Male students involved with athletics have significantly fewer encounters with the police. Athletic participation is associated with fewer incidences of smoking, drug use, unwanted pregnancy, delinquent behaviour, and dropping out of school. Sport and physical activity programmes may also provide important leadership opportunities and contribute to building a sense of community and belonging (Kerr, 1996).

Sport may also enhance other values of citizenship. Given its representational status (athletes on many teams take on the mantle of institutional or community representatives), sport encourages the spirit of selfless responsibility. Through travel, involvement in sport teaches the traditions, values and geography of community and country. And, with its ethic of fair play and impartial adherence to the rules, sport demands respect for others, particularly those from different backgrounds and with different abilities.

Participation in sport and physical activity may also have a positive effect on psychological health and development, improving self-esteem and self-concept in
children, and contributing to a reduction in symptoms of depression, stress, and anxiety. We should not underestimate sport's contributions to psychological health. The prevalence of psychiatric disorders is 10-20 percent in American school-age children. The Ontario Child Health study found that more than 18 percent of the children and adolescents in Ontario had at least one diagnosable psychiatric disorder. Regular participation in sport and physical activity has markedly beneficial effects for those at high-risk (Goldberg, 1995).

**Creating Safe and Supportive Communities**

The creation of safe and healthy communities is an important social and economic concern, crucial to quality of life, investment, the retention of a skilled and committed labour force, and tourism. It is essential to the harmonious development of children, upon which so many other benefits depend. Current crime and safety statistics in Toronto show that the number of young offenders (as a proportion of total offenders) is increasing, and increasing numbers of young people are being charged with crimes. At the same time, children and youth are still more likely to be victims of crime rather than offenders. Consequently, the creation of safe communities not only reduces the number of young offenders but also the number of young victims. Sport and recreation programmes and facilities are an important part of community redevelopment and regeneration. Such programming provides important opportunities for learning humanistic and social skills, and strengthens community cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Community sports and recreation projects are an important means of providing low-cost, healthy recreational opportunities for all citizens. Community regeneration and development projects bring people together. Neighbourhoods with a strong sense of community have less crime (Toronto, 1999).

It is difficult to put a dollar figure on such contributions – the calculation begs too many questions. But let us suggest one indicator. Community breakdown can reduce property values by as much as 75 percent. In Canada, the direct costs of the criminal justice system are almost $10 billion a year. Providing sport and recreation services to all children would easily be offset by the resulting enhanced community values, and the savings from policing and reduced crime.

These research findings are well known to most Canadians. They regularly restate their confidence in the potential of sport in everyday conversations, school assemblies, athletic banquets, letters to the editor, and calls to open-line radio programmes. These convictions underlie many parents’ decisions about, and investments in their children’s activities, and shape Canadians’ responses to national polling about the importance of drug-free sport (in the early 1990s) and physical education (in the early 2000s).

Such high expectations about sport also have a long history. As early as Confederation, there were prominent men who believed that sport participation would enhance the values of citizenship in the new Dominion, and that inspiring performances by Canadian athletes in international competition would stimulate national and
local community pride. By the late 19th and early 20th century, that confidence had spread to provincial and federal legislatures so that many provinces introduced courses in physical education in the new, compulsory public schools, and the federal government pushed through a national curriculum known as the Strathcona Trust. Service organizations like the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Christian Associations created sports programmes and summer camps to give middle-class children the benefits of sport and physical activity; and municipal governments built and staffed parks, playgrounds and community centres to spread the gospel of sport to slum and immigrant children in the interests of assimilation, social harmony and social control.

Of course, sport was initially developed as an exclusive form of socialization and affirmation for British, middle-class boys and men, so that the spread of sport often required a bitter politics, as working-class and immigrant families struggled for the leisure to play and then the public institutions sought to provide the opportunities. Girls and women pushed back against the expectation that they merely sit on the sidelines and applaud; and aboriginal and black athletes confronted daily racism. But such was the perceived promise of sport that these groups persisted. The entire history of Canadian sport could be written as the struggle of individuals and groups to win the benefits of sport for themselves.

By the late 1930s, many Canadians had come to believe that the benefits of sport and physical activity were so great that opportunity should be available to all, as a right or public good comparable to health and education. That spirit, and the concern for national fitness at a time of war, led the Canadian government to pass the National Physical Fitness Act in 1943, and the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act in 1961. Canadians were at the forefront of the effort to include the rights to leisure and an ‘adequate standard of living, education, health, and cultural life’ in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and to proclaim the International Charter on Physical Education and Sport in 1978, which declares that opportunities to engage in these activities are ‘a fundamental right for all’. This spirit also informs the Physical Activity and Sport Act of 2003, which seeks to “promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being,” and promises “the full and fair participation of all persons in sport;” and the Canadian Sport Policy, signed by the federal, provincial and territorial governments, which commits them to increasing participation as their first priority.

**Community sport ranked second only to family as a very positive influence on youth values**

The potential benefits of sport are clearly evident from the results of the...
For example: ‘community sport’ (40%) ranked second only to ‘family’ (50%) in terms of a list of characteristics that respondents believed had a very positive influence on youth values (followed by school, friends and peers, and church/religion); another 52% felt that community sports had a generally positive influence, sounding the first note of caution. Respondents were asked what values community sports were capable of promoting (rather than what they actually did promote); they endorsed a list of values that they felt were capable of being strongly promoted by community sport, led by teamwork (72%) and commitment to purpose (63%); disturbingly, only honesty (41%) did not achieve at least 50% endorsement.

But there is also evidence of a gap between potential and practice, expectations and realized outcomes. Respondents also felt that it was critically important (41%) or definitely important for youth sports to actively promote the values outlined. This seems to be where the GAP is emerging, only 19% were very confident, while 62% were somewhat confident that community sports are promoting positive values and character building.

Respondents also generally endorsed a list of community benefits resulting from community sport; and over 40% of the sample currently had some involvement in community sport. Of the over 60% of respondents whose children were or had been involved in community sports, 15% noted that their expectations had been exceeded, while another 54% pointed out that their expectations had been met. This latter point gives no sense of what the expectations might have been, and whether such individuals had high or low expectations for their children’s involvement in community sports, but again the results raise a small note of caution. The 27% of the sample whose expectations had not been met were offered an opportunity to identify what was missing. The responses are a catalogue of the usual critiques of youth sports in the community – e.g., lack of interest, poor coaching/supervision, too much emphasis on winning, and parental interference/pressure.

Two final questions in the CCES/Decima poll also raised a note of caution about community sports. When respondents were asked about the most serious problems facing youth sports today, they generated another list of indictments/issues that need to be dealt with (only 15% of the sample did not identify a problem). There was also little agreement among the sample, suggesting that they were possibly identifying problems with which they had experience. The problems identified ranged from focus on winning and competition (16%) and cost of participation (13%), to over- (10%) or under- (7%) involvement of parents and poor coaching/leadership (6%). When prompted by a list of specific issues in youth sports, respondents identified the following as very serious: doping (42%), harassment (38%), intolerance and racism (29%), inadequate facilities (27%), unfair play

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1 The survey, conducted in March, 2002, involved a representative sample of 2,001 Canadians. Results are accurate to within plus or minus 2.2% with a 95% confidence level.
(21%), injuries (18%) and limited opportunities for participation (18%).

In summary, the results from this poll seem to be quite mixed, with individuals having high expectations and a general level of satisfaction with community sports for youth, and yet a number of notes of caution and concerns. We should not overstate the issues and problems. However, there appears to be a distinct gap between the potential of community/youth sport to help develop the character of youth and to strengthen communities, and the actual practices in youth sports and the experiences of parents and athletes.

The Challenges

1. Barriers

Without access to opportunities to participate in sports, any discussions of the gap between expectations and experiences, in terms of character and community development, are moot. Barriers to participation include various forms of intolerance and discrimination, the absence of accessible opportunities, and the demands of household and other forms of labour. Such barriers are usually based on ‘location’ (structural or geographical) in the Canadian population, and they include: social class, disability, ethno-cultural heritage, age, gender, and place of occupation – urban, rural, Northern, etc.). Analyses often give the impression that each of these proposed barriers are of equal importance. However, Donnelly and Harvey (1996) pointed out the significance of one in particular. Lower social class appears to be the major barrier – both as a distinct population segment, and in relation to all of the other population segments noted above. Social class is the primary socio-economic determinant that creates substantive inequalities. The increasing inequity in the distribution of wealth among Canadians – particularly during the last decade – may constitute the single most important barrier to access to sport and physical activity, and may undermine most of the proposed initiatives to overcome other barriers. When this is combined with over 20 years of the decline of public provision, increasing privatization and user fees, and the decline of physical education and school sport opportunities, social class constitutes the most significant barrier.

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2 Physical education as a subject is not being taught in many parts of Canada, let alone well with qualified instructors and safe, appropriate facilities. An international survey conducted by Hardman and Marshall (2001) found that less than 47% of schools in Canada actually teach the required curriculum. In Ontario, despite a fine new curriculum, People for Education’s 2001/02 Tracking Report (the latest available for primary schools) shows that: 68% of schools reported no physical education teacher; the number of schools with physical education teachers has declined from 41% to 32% in five years; the ratio of students to physical education teachers was 1185 to 1, well beyond what is reasonable and responsible; and only 18% of schools reported a full-time physical education teacher. Research shows that health and physical curricula are most effectively realized when linked to broadly-based co-curricular programs of sport, movement and dance, yet in recent years, such programs have deteriorated and/or have become increasingly inaccessible, the consequence of cutback-stimulated labour strife and increased user fees. In high schools, as the 2002-03 tracking survey by People for Education found, 45% of all high school physical education programs charge user fees; 78% of schools charge athletic fees, ranging from $2 to
The evidence to support this point is overwhelming, and it confirms a consistent finding in the sociology of sport regarding the linear relationship between income and participation. For example, Canadian Council of Social Development’s (2001) analyses of the Statistics Canada National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) (for 1994 and 1996) identify children’s recreation participation above and below the low-income cut off (LICO) (analysis by family income quintiles also shows a linear relationship; the more a family earns, the more likely the children are to be involved):

- participation in sports with a coach one or more times a week –
  
  $250 a year, compared to 70% of schools in 2001/02.

In addition, virtually every school is involved in fund-raising: 85% of schools reported that students participated in fundraising, compared to 83% in 2001/02; 69% of schools reported teachers fundraised, compared to 66% in 2001/02 and 55% of schools reported fundraising by parents, compared to 47% in 2001/02. The top 10% of schools raised the same amount of money as the bottom 79% put together.

Moreover, many facilities in which these programs are to be conducted are in desperate need of repairs or are even being closed. In Toronto, 42 swimming pools in public schools, all used after hours by the public, are in danger of being closed because of budget cuts. These cuts and user fees affect community sport as well. School boards now charge significant user fees for their use. In Ontario, the number of schools charging for community use increased by 119% between 1998 and 2002. In 2002-03, 94% of secondary schools now charge user fees for community space, up 21% since 2000/01, and 30% of schools charging fees reported an increase in user fees since last year. In Toronto, as a consequence, there was a 43% drop in the number of groups using schools between 1998 and 2002.

Preliminary analyses of the 1998 NLSCY (Statistics Canada, 2001) show no significant change in these findings:

- children who were least likely to participate in organized activities were those in lower income families, those with very young parents, those whose primary care-giver had less than a high school education and those in single-parent families;

- younger children in the lowest income quartile were three time more likely to have never participated in organized activities (sports, music, arts or clubs) than children in the highest quartile;
younger children whose parents had less
than a high school education were more
than twice as likely to have never
participated in organized activities than
were those children whose parents had
higher education.

These general survey findings are also
confirmed by more focused community
studies (e.g., Hughes & Griffiths, 1992;
Offord, Lipman & Duku, 1998). When
straightforward measures of income and
education are combined with issues such as
family and organizational constraints, or
combined with other categories of social
exclusion (gender, ethnocultural heritage,
etc.), the impact on participation becomes
even more significant.

Barriers to participation also result from
assumptions about the way sports should be
played. For example, the highly competitive
/ professional / pyramid model provides
less and less opportunities for less talented
and/or smaller children as they grow older.
Also, the type of sports that are played
and/or receive the resources and facilities
affect access. Those most accessible are the
Euro/North American, and professional/
competitive model sports. Some immigrant
children, and children who prefer less
competitive forms of sports are often
excluded.

If barriers are only considered in terms of
resources, the CCES/Decima (2002) survey
provides some insight. In response to Q. 8
(‘What would you say is the main reason or
reasons why your expectations have not
been met for your children?’): ‘lack of
financial support’ and ‘lack of quality
programmes’ each received 7%. On Q. 12
(‘most serious problems facing youth in
community sports today’), resource issues
toted 30% (high cost, 13%, lack of
resources/facilities, 11%, lack of funding,
6%); and, lack of facilities (27%) and lack of
opportunities (18%) also figured
prominently in the list of seven serious
issues facing community sports (Q. 13).

2. Quality of the youth sport experience

If access to opportunities to participate is
assured, other factors affect the quality of
the experience for children and young
people – whether they feel safe,
comfortable, challenged, respected; whether
the environment is safe and comfortable
(e.g., air quality, water temperature,
appropriate clothing, etc.). Jay Coakley
(2002) has addressed the issue of quality
programmes in terms of their contributions
to youth development:

At the risk of oversimplifying an
impressive array of research and theory
on youth and youth development, I
have concluded that positive transitions
from childhood to adolescence to
adulthood are most likely when young
people live in a context in which they
are: (1) physically safe; (2) personally
valued; (3) socially connected; (4)
morally and economically supported; (5)
personally and politically empowered;
and (6) hopeful about the future. To the
extent that sport programs serve these
needs, we can expect them to contribute
to the positive development of
participants.

For the purposes of this paper, we focus on
just two aspects of the quality of the youth
sport experience: (1) opportunities for
unstructured/‘unsupervised’ participation;
and (2) relationships between youth and adults. However, the two are related in terms of the form and extent of adult involvement.

**Opportunities for unstructured/‘unsupervised’ participation**: Where safety and supervision are issues, and where learning skills is important, it is appropriate that adults are involved in children’s and youth sport experiences. However, there is considerable evidence that children also learn and need to learn in unorganized settings, where they define their own activity, make and supervise their own rules, mediate their own disputes and learn from their own mistakes. Consider the evident motivation, ability and achievement of young people in organizing a vast array of activities, from pick-up games in streets and parks, to the pond hockey league recently formalized by young people in Eastern Ontario (adults only providing transportation). The significant growth of so-called ‘alternative’ sports – e.g., skateboarding, in-line skating, snowboarding, BMX biking, and ultimate Frisbee which, according to the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) is the fastest growing high school sport in Ontario – also demonstrates the desire and capacity of young people for self-directed activity and raises serious questions about the extent of and need for adult imposed structures and supervision.

The answers invariably suggest that adult-organized, structured youth sport experiences that are based on principles of exclusion and regulation are simply not enough. The ‘alternatives’ are inclusive and creative. Children and youth who have the means are selecting ‘alternatives’ in increasing numbers, but there are reasons to be concerned about supervision and safety.

**Relationships with adults**: In organized youth sports, perhaps the major determinants of the quality of the experience are the relationships with adults – parents, coaches, officials, and administrators. These relationships – and particularly the quality of coaching and mentoring – can realize or dash the expectations for youth sport. The values and practices employed by adults can be powerfully enabling and enriching, or can drive someone out of sport for a lifetime.

Problems in these relationships have been recognized since the earliest days of the growth of adult organized youth sports (1950s), and they are still prevalent today. The CCES/Decima (2002) survey results indicate the following, just in terms of the quality of relationships between adults and youth: In response to Q. 8, poor coaching-supervision (14%), too much emphasis on winning (12%) and parental influence/pressure (8%) ranked just behind an unexplained ‘lack of interest/participation’ (25%); and lack of
leadership/role models (3%) was also cited. Respondents mentioned focus on winning/competition (16%), violence (10%), parental over- (10%) and under- (7%) involvement, and poor coaching/leadership (6%) as among the most serious problems facing community sport today (Q. 12). In response to Q. 13, they ranked harassment (38%), intolerance/racism (29%), lack of fair play (21%) and injuries (18%) as very serious issues facing community sports today. All of these represent challenges that are associated with youth dropout from organized sports; that result in problems and concerns in the community about youth sports; and that result in a failure of youth sports to adequately meet expectations in terms of character and community development.

The vast majority of youth/community sport is run by volunteers. Given the concerns about leadership, there are reasons to pay special attention to the issue of volunteerism. A 1995 study by the Sports Council in the UK entitled “Valuing Volunteers in UK Sport” indicated that 1.5 million active volunteers contributed over C$3.5 billion in services. [There is good reason to expect that, for a variety of reasons, the proportional number and services contribution of volunteers in Canadian sport is higher.] The study identified the most common problem of volunteerism in UK sport: that a dedicated few volunteers were responsible for a large proportion of work. For example, a volunteer may work as both a league convenor and a team coach. This leads to a host of inter-related problems: the quality of coaching, officiating and administration is all closely related to recruitment and retention. The UK study noted a shortage of volunteers that resulted from deterrents to participation such as the threat of being given excessive work and/or work for which one was not qualified or trained. The challenge of volunteerism is thus another way of framing the challenge of leadership.

Effective youth leadership, whether conducted by professional staff in schools and municipalities or by volunteers in community clubs requires adequate training, supervision and accountability. Although the NCCP in Canada provides some preliminary level of training for professional and volunteer coaches, adequate training and supervision are clearly absent. Also, the primary reason for becoming involved as a volunteer is one’s own children’s involvement. There is, as a consequence, a tremendous loss of experience as (is usually the case) these people leave the sport when their children do.

3. The political will to implement changes and restore public sector opportunities

While there are some relatively new issues associated with the changing nature of parenting in the last 10-15 years, most of the problems with youth sports are not new; they have been well-documented since the 1960s, and numerous reports, many with positive and constructive recommendations, are gathering dust on the shelves in professors’ offices and in public and voluntary sport organizations. In many parts of Canada (but not all), the challenges have been exacerbated in recent years by the
cutbacks in public opportunities, particularly in schools, colleges, universities and municipal recreation departments, and by the imposition of user fees. Some beneficial changes have come about as a result of crisis management – e.g., the concerns about injury and violence that led to an increase in the age for body contact in many boys’ hockey leagues (a change that was, in a short-sighted and regressive way, reversed – but has now been re-instated); the concerns about childhood sexual abuse following the Graham James and Maple Leaf Gardens cases that resulted in some positive changes (e.g., the Speak Out programme). But the systematic attempt to address challenges is rarely undertaken proactively. And where reform stems from crises, it is rarely implemented as thoroughly as it should be (e.g., the Speak Out programme has not been taken up by many other sports despite the generosity of the Canadian Hockey Association in making it available.) Moreover, the lip service elected officials pay to the importance of sport and physical activity is rarely matched by action. Canada was once the leading Commonwealth nation in sports development, but the federal government has allowed Canada to fall far behind its traditional rivals in terms of programme support, has reduced the status of the responsible minister and has complicated policy, planning and programme delivery through divided jurisdiction. Many provincial governments are no better, cutting and privatizing their programs and crippling school boards and municipalities, so that facilities are closed and/or deteriorate, equity programs abandoned, and growing user fees restrict access to opportunities. While the public sector was once the entry point and major training ground for young athletes in most sports, this is less and less the case. In virtually every case, the politicians claim that their constituents are indifferent or hostile to publicly enabled sport and physical activity.

Politicians claim that their constituents are indifferent or hostile to publicly enabled sport and physical activity

The Consequences

The consequences of our failure to meet the three challenges outlined above have resulted in the current ‘crisis’ in youth sport, and the gap in expectations between expected benefits of participation and the reality of many young people’s sport experiences. Character and community development will not be realized in as complete a way as we might expect unless we meet these challenges.

Questions and Issues

The main questions we address in this discussion paper stem from the three challenges described above:

- How do we lower/remove barriers to participation?
- How do we improve the quality of the organized sport experience for young people?
- Where can we find the political will to implement changes that will make
participation a more positive experience; one that will help develop the character of our youth and strengthen our communities?

For the purposes of this paper, we conclude by briefly raising some of the issues associated with each of the questions raised above.

**Barriers to Participation**

How do we lower/remove barriers to participation? Donnelly and Harvey (1996) developed an in-depth analysis of structural barriers to participation in sports and physical activity in Canada. A model was developed recognizing three types of barriers — infrastructural, superstructural, and procedural — and two types of access — participational and representational. This model had the advantage of easily identifying concrete actions to be taken in order to overcome systemic barriers to access to sport and physical activity.

Several of the key recommendations are outlined here:

*Infrastructure:*

- Affordable, if not free-of-charge programmes with accessible and affordable transportation: The most at-risk groups generally represent the lowest income Canadians.

- Timing and scheduling: Events, activities and programmes must take into account the time constraints and availability of the targeted populations, on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.

*Facilities:* should be welcoming with regard to their physical aspects (ramps, spacious hallways and washrooms, accessible switches, counters, automatic doors, etc.), and with regard to the atmosphere (music, decoration, hosting that is sensitive to particular situations and needs).

*Superstructure:*

- Policies: regarding equity and harassment have to be designed, implemented, and respected.

- Nature of activities: must be designed appropriately to involve, accommodate and invite targeted populations, and must respect cultural mores.

- Leaders (professional or volunteer) must have appropriate social awareness, cultural sensitivity, child development and technical training; must play a key role in advocating the development of policies and programmes that reduce barriers to access.

- Maximizing equal opportunities through dialogue: individual members, and their groups and communities must voice their concerns, be heard, and act in concert to overcome barriers together.

*Procedures:*

- Hierarchical structures must give way to widespread consultation, equal representation, positive and community based action, empowering people to make their own choices and keep control of programmes.
• Social support: should be provided or facilitated for isolated groups or individuals needing help to be able to participate.

• Targeted populations must be made aware of their rights, and of resources that may be made available to them.

Donnelly and Harvey (1996) note that in order to achieve access to sport and physical activity, many initiatives have to be undertaken whose impact is broader than sport and physical activity per se. Initiatives that attempt to increase access without taking into account the overall living and working conditions of the target populations are unlikely to be successful. The need for such broadly based initiatives is being recognized in a number of areas. For example, with reference to youth-at-risk, John Hagan notes that, “Social problems – poverty, racism and deprived neighbourhoods – are interrelated. Social agencies must concentrate not on individual problems and programs but rather on combining their efforts and their expertise. Comprehensive integrated approaches are needed to reduce the exposure of children and adolescents to high-risk settings” (Cusack, 1995, p. 17).

Donnelly and Harvey (1996) also describe two forms of access – participational and representational. Participation “gets you in the door;” representation means that you have some say in the form and meaning of the programmes and activities (now often referred to as ‘agency’). The professionalized sport culture that developed throughout the 20th century endorsed and promoted an authoritarian style of leadership that may be inappropriate for many adolescents. Of course, many young people learn deference, and obedience to authority (sometimes called ‘coachability’ by coaches and sport psychologists) in such relationships, and some learn to cope through the relationships established with teammates. However, as Voyle (1989) pointed out with regard to representation, and that period of youth when the struggle for independence and rebellion against adult authority are most evident: “Adult monopoly of power leaves adolescents with a choice between two alternatives: to comply with adult authority; or to choose not to participate” (p. 31). As Chalip (1980) points out, with reference to this issue: “Existing sporting institutions may, at worst, be squeezing out the very athletes who would ultimately be the most successful…” (p. 33). In the largely successful case of representational access described by Voyle, she is able to offer a recipe for success (p. 33):

• be willing to share power with teenagers

• maximise opportunities for teenagers to assume significant roles

• make provision for adolescents’ social needs
have realistic expectations

As Voyle notes: “What matters most to teenagers is being allowed the chance to do something for themselves. Adults can help by offering guidance, support and access to resources” (p. 34). Of course, as noted in the following section, representational access is far more significant than participational access in terms of character and community development.

2. Quality of the Organized Sport Experience

How do we improve the quality of the organized sport experience for young people?

How can we increase the opportunities for unstructured/‘unsupervised’ participation?

And, how can we better understand and enhance the relationships between young people and adults in youth sports?

Quality control initiatives have been developed for youth sport and activity programmes (e.g., the High Five programme developed by the Ontario Parks and Recreation Association) with varying degrees of success. There are numerous prescriptions, charters, and manifestos dealing with issues in youth sports – all developed with the aim of improving the quality of the experience for young people – and all regularly ignored in youth sports programmes. No wonder so many young people with the means are seeking ‘alternatives’.

Voyle’s comments above lead us to ask when / why / and how adult supervision is necessary. One of the earliest public debates about youth sport was held in New York State in the 1920s. In the course of that debate, Frederick Rand Rogers, the state director of health and physical education, became convinced that players would not learn to make decisions (character development) from sport if adults always sent in the plays and otherwise decided for them. He therefore relegated teachers and other adults to the stands during all competitions (Pennington 1981). More recently, Donnelly (2000) proposed that we need to re-imagine a form of children’s sport in which adults provide an appropriate level of supervision for safety, but otherwise decline to intervene (we might call this the ‘lifeguard’ or ‘recess duty’ model). In other words, there are many times, occasions, and forms of sport where a ‘hands-off’ approach is in the best interests of children (of course, this would not apply to such things as learning to swim, or activity on climbing walls).

Sometimes I think that by being so involved in our kids’ sports, we dilute their experience. After all, it’s not their win, it’s our win. Do all the valuable lessons – losing, striking out, missing the winning shot – have the same impact when Mom and Dad are there to immediately say it’s okay?… As parents, we know that at some point we need to make it their game, their recital, their grades. If we share every element of their lives, we’re cheating them out of part of it… As hard as it is to risk missing her first home run, or not being there to comfort him after the missed foul shot, at some point we need to take ourselves out of their ball game. Because that is what good parents do (Keri, 2000, p. 55).
We do not want to throw out the baby with bathwater. A great deal of anecdotal evidence regarding young people’s positive sport experiences involves relationships with adults (“my track coach”, “the guy who taught me to skate”, “my Dad”). Bruno Bettelheim has argued that it is important in the development of all young people for them to have at least one unconditional relationship with an unrelated adult. Sport often provides such opportunities, with a coach, or a teacher in school extracurricular activities. It is also necessary to understand and encourage such relationships, in which the adults may range from a caring house league coach in soccer, to an aloof and disciplined sensei in a martial arts academy. One part of this understanding concerns modern parenting, while the other part concerns volunteerism since (apart from student-athletes/teacher-coaches, and young high performance athletes with professional coaches) most of the adults with whom young people are involved in organized sports are volunteers and/or parents.

Following the Sports Council study of volunteers noted previously, Sport England started the Volunteer Investment Programme (VIP) in 1997. The aims of this programme are as follows:

- To help amplify recruitment, retention, and recognition of volunteers and offer a volunteer management plan to support clubs and leagues with volunteers.
- To promote good volunteer management practice in the form of basic training and the implementation of an award scheme.

It is worth considering research and programmes of this type and, with regard to the last point above, to assess and monitor the new Coaching Certification Programme. Numerous recent studies of volunteering point out that “good deeds alone do not make good citizens.” They note that volunteers need to be introduced to the context of their work, and the relationship of their task to the end goal; they need quality support and supervision; and they need on-site instruction and reflection. They also need to understand, embrace and practice the values of inclusivity, especially with respect to gender equity, ethno-cultural inclusion, sexual diversity and dis/ability. It is perhaps not necessary to point out that none of these are automatic characteristic of sport volunteerism! But in the diverse Canada of the 21st century, these values and skills are absolutely essential. Volunteer leaders are models of citizenship and character, and they have enormous influence upon the athletes under their charge, especially if those athletes are given the opportunity for representational access (agency).

Similar considerations need to be made for parents. Jay Coakley (2001, 2002) has outlined many of the characteristic pressures of modern parenting, pointing out that if
today’s parents raised their children in the same way that they were raised, it would result in their condemnation as bad parents, or even in charges of neglect and abuse (e.g., many middle aged adults will remember days when they were children when they left home in the morning, played all day – often without their parents knowing exactly where they were – and returned home for supper). Today’s parents must know where their children are, and what they are doing, 24 hours a day. It is necessary to understand the pressures and expectations of being parents today in order to make any determinations about enhancing the youth sport experience. And it is necessary to re-examine the balance between involvement and detachment as parents and coaches/leaders of youth sports.

Finally, we need to consider the mix of volunteer and professional leaders. Research suggests that very few of the well documented problems of youth sport occur in Canadian school and municipal sports programmes, where coaches are trained teachers and recreationalists, with close professional supervision and public accountability. While there are many good reasons for strengthening the volunteer contribution to sport, should we not also strive to increase the number of professional leadership positions, especially in public institutions?

3. Forging the political will

How can we forge the political will to implement changes that will make participation a more positive experience; one that will help develop the character of our youth and strengthen our communities?

Canadian history and the example of other successful community-led projects are both suggestive. The lesson from Canadian history is that sports and physical activity lobbyists have been most successful when their concerns resonate with other broader priorities of Canadian public policy, and when there is a prominent public figure to take them up. At the federal level, for example, the first major steps forward – the Strathcona Trust, the National Physical Fitness Act, and the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act – were all undertaken at times of perceived national crisis, championed by a public figure outside sport. The Fitness and Amateur Sport Act was introduced by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, who strongly believed that ‘sports are important in the struggle for the hearts and minds of men.’ Canadian losses to the Soviet Union in Olympic hockey, during the depths of the Cold War, among other concerns, prompted Diefenbaker to intervene. The turn to high performance during the 1970s by the Trudeau Government, facing a crisis of national unity provoked by Quebec separatism and western Canadian regionalism, provides another example. The reaffirmation of drug-free sport in the early 1990s, led by Chief Justice Charles Dubin during the crisis of national identity occasioned by the Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA is still another. In each case, sport advocates linked their cause to the resolution of broader challenges and found allies who realized the tremendous potential of sport.
This analysis suggests that the effort to link sport to the broader goals of Canadian public policy, initiated by the Mills Committee and continued through the Canadian sport policy process with the effort to draw in the larger ministries of health, justice and human resources, should be maintained and strengthened. It also suggests that a continual, concerted effort should be made to articulate the needs for sport and physical activity in the context of the leading issues of the day, such as the need to revitalize health opportunities (Recommendation No. 23 of the Romanow Report endorses the goals of the Canadian sport policy), the perceived crisis in childhood obesity, and the need to rebuild and revitalize the major Canadian cities. (Similar linkages need to be strengthened at the provincial and territorial levels).

Another lesson from recent sport history is that the senior governments seem much more willing to invest in the staging of international games than the infrastructure for everyday sport, and in doing so, they often ignore the requirements for long-term legacy set out in their own policies, such as the federal hosting policy. Every effort should be made by the sport lobby to ensure that bidding for and planning major games are tied to the revitalization of grassroots sport and physical activity, as well as high performance sport, in the manner attempted by the Toronto bid for the 2008 Olympics and pursued even more effectively by the Legacy Now programs of the Vancouver/Whistler bid for 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

What has still not emerged is a forceful, articulate champion or champions outside of sport. To be sure, many public figures play, watch and support sport, but it is hard to think of any who have made sport a priority in their public advocacy and private lobbying/decision-making. More thought should be given to the challenge of recruiting and supporting such a champion. As a first step, sport and physical activity advocates need to build stronger bridges to communities of interest in education, health, justice, community and social services, and the arts. They also need to add their voices to the idea of a strong, effective and responsive public sector. One of the first targets for those who want to downsize government is physical education and sport. They dismiss these essential activities as ‘frills’.

Two key requirements of successful interest group pressure are ‘speak with a common voice’ and ‘find allies who will adopt your cause as their own’. The Canadian sport community has long recognized the first of these rules, and has struggled to create some sort of representative but unified public advocate. While the Canadian Sport Council of the early 1990s and the National Advisory Council to the Secretary of State for Amateur Sport appointed immediately after the National Sport Summit died in infancy, the Sport Matters group seems to enjoy widespread support, and to have been extremely effective in bringing the community’s views to the federal decision-makers. To be sure, this effort needs to be strengthened, but it is definitely in the right direction.
But the sport community has been much less prepared to recruit allies outside of sport, let alone to make the effort to reach out to, persuade and steward them. This has now become an urgent priority if the arguments of the sport community are not to be dismissed as special pleading. There are obvious coalitions to be made — with public health advocates and officials, municipalities and local boards of trade seeking urban renewal, educational leaders concerned about the declining quality of schools, and a host of public interest organizations, NGOs and service clubs. In fact, this is a propitious time, as professional and community leaders in many of these fields have become concerned about the growing social costs of physical inactivity. While one arm of the sports community needs to lobby government more strategically and systematically, another needs to take its advocacy into the broad community.

Does this analysis make sense? Are those concerned about the state and status of sport and physical activity in Canada prepared to make the additional effort to forge the political will to help revitalize these important fields? Is the time propitious? Any discussion of ‘the sport we want’ will also have to address the condition for its creation and reproduction.

**Conclusion**

It has not been our intent to provide any solutions in this paper, but rather to suggest some context, and raise some issues and questions with regard to ways in which sport may be implicated in the development of character and community.

**REFERENCES**


Community Sport, Community Choice: The Ethical Challenges of Community Sport

by Robert Butcher, Ph.D., Foundations: Consultants on Ethics and Values, and Angela Schneider, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Western Ontario

Sport, wherever, and at whatever level it is played, always presents a set of moral challenges. Because of the nature of sport, it is not possible to participate without encountering those moral challenges. But, like moral challenges in many other fields of life, those challenges often do not present themselves explicitly. Rather, they are there to be identified by those who look. However, failing to identify a particular situation as a moral challenge does not make it go away. It just means that the challenge is posed, and answered, without reflection.

Community sport (all sport for that matter) is full of unidentified moral challenges. This paper will identify some of those challenges, and then will go on to argue that if the challenges are left unidentified, the solutions that will be arrived at by default may well not represent what we want from sport. In this paper, we will argue that the logic of sport, the logic of performance and the zero-sum-game, if left to themselves, will lead us to a sport experience that is callous in its disregard for competitors as persons, and ruthless and unprincipled in its pursuit of victory. The logic of sport and performance must be understood in the context of the nature of sports as games and tempered by the ethic of good competition.

The logic of sport itself, that is, the desire to improve skills and performance in order to compete and win, will, by default, drive the values sport exhibits. The logic of sport is the drive to improved performance and the constant emphasis on technical and tactical ability and skill. If we want sport to exhibit a set of values that is distinct from performance values we need to articulate and defend those values. That is, we have to make choices. In this paper we ask two main questions – one that is probably fairly easy to answer but hard to live, the other of which is far harder to answer. The first question concerns the sport we want and fairness or fair play. It is a commonplace perception that nice guys finish last in many cases. The idea is that being nice, or playing fair, may well cause you to lose some games. This is quite true. Playing fairly will prevent you from achieving victories that could have been achieved by unfair means. The first and simple question is: Is the primary objective in sport victory, or is it fair victory? The answer to this question is probably less controversial; it will be difficult to find people who publicly espouse the victory by any means philosophy (except, of course, the infamous coach Vince Lombardi who claimed that “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only

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3 A “zero-sum” game is a game where anything won by one competitor entails a corresponding loss by another competitor. Sports are typically seen as zero-sum games, in that one team wins, the other loses.
thing.”). However, the challenge here is in what we do as we try to live up to our convictions.

The second question is more difficult and it focuses squarely on community sport. Is the primary objective of community sport the development of character? One way of approaching community sport would be to insist that it be conducted fairly, and then to let it continue, allowing participants to gain the lessons they can from fair sport.

Another is to take the view that the primary purpose of community sport is the development of character and to structure it to produce the maximum beneficial effects. What is the sport we want – community sport conducted for its own sake with the added benefits of life-lessons learned along the way, or community sport explicitly used as a tool of personal and social development?

We will attack these questions first by exploring the nature of sport. We face the problems in sport that we do precisely because of what sport is. That is, if left alone, a superficial understanding of sport – as a performance driven, competitive, zero-sum game – will tend to structure the way in which participants make the moral choices posed by sport. But it need not be this way. Sport necessarily presents the challenges but it is also within sport that the answers can be found. We will argue that if sport is presented well, and described accurately, the ethic of good competition, an ethic that is an outgrowth of fair play, will emerge from sport itself.

From our discussion of the nature of sport we will move to some of the specific moral challenges presented by community sport and identify the way in which the structure of community sport leads us to answer those challenges in one way rather than another. We will look at those challenges first through the eyes of young athletes, and then identify some of the challenges faced by other participants. Then it will be time to accentuate the positive. Not only does sport present challenges and carry with it the seeds of the solutions to those challenges, sport is also a source of great joy and pleasure. Sport is fun, and that enjoyment, if harnessed, brings with it the motivation to play well and compete fairly. We will conclude by examining the choices faced by those who would defend and promote community sport. What do we need to decide and how do we need to act to allow community sport to be all that it can be?

**Sport is never neutral – The Nature of Sport**

Sport cannot be played, practiced, taught, or participated in, in a “value-neutral” way. That is, because of the nature of sport – it is rule-bound, it is competitive and it provides abundant opportunities for moral choice – participation in sport will exhibit values.

Sport is a human creation. It is an enterprise that is specifically created by people, for people. There are some central features of sport that give it its character and logic and some further characteristics that we will subsequently unpack in terms of an ethic of good competition.

Sport is created. Sports do not spring fully formed from nowhere; they are not discovered. They are made. The literature of
the philosophy of sport talks of the goal or objective of a sport, typically described in game-independent terms (Bernard Suits called this the “pre-lusory” or pre-game playing description of the goal of the game) and a set of rules that govern the attainment of that goal. So, for example, the goal of both soccer and golf is to place a ball into a specified location. The rules define the location – the soccer goal is 7.3m x 2.4m placed at either end of a playing area defined in a certain way. The rules also describe the means that are permissible in the attainment of the objective. The ball must not be propelled using the hand or arm, and so on. Similarly for golf, the places into which the golf ball must be propelled (the “cups”) are scattered around a field. A stick must be used to strike the golf ball and the ball must be struck from wherever it lies, etc.

These descriptions, of course, are just the beginning. But a number of critical features should be emerging. The first is that the goals of sport stand, in an important way, outside of everyday life. Hitting little white balls into cups with a special club, or blasting pucks into nets with a special stick are not activities humans need to engage in to survive. We need to eat, build shelter and so on, but we do not need to hit balls with sticks. That observation raises a puzzle too. Because we do not need to hit balls with sticks, we find ourselves in the position of needing a reason for doing it.

For some, a surprisingly small proportion of those who play sport, participation is extrinsically motivated – that is, their rewards are found outside of sport, and sport itself is a means to an end. Those few people participate in sport for money or fame and glory, but by far the majority participates because it is fun. For most people, sport is intrinsically motivated – participation is an end in itself. A second element of the nature of sport is that the rules of sport serve a very interesting function. The objective of the rules is to make the attainment of the goal of the game more difficult. It is harder to achieve that goal if we scatter the cups around a field and hit the ball with a stick. The same thing is true for the rules for any sport. This too marks sport out from almost all of the other activities we engage in in everyday life. If the objective is to get home from work, we typically plan the most efficient route, taking into account traffic, speed limits and so on.5

This is standard goal-directed behaviour –


5 It is worth noting that we often have multiple objectives. We may want both to get home as quickly as possible and to enjoy the ride. The pursuit of either of those objectives could result in a trade off with the other.
the choice of the most efficient means available to achieve the desired objective. Contrast this type of behaviour with sport. Sport consists of a made-up goal that stands outside of the normal objectives of everyday life. The achievement of that goal is deliberately made unnecessarily difficult by the rules. And we love it!

Because sport is created, it can be changed. We constantly tinker with the rules of sport to make the games more interesting, either to play or to watch. The rules of a sport not only define the sport itself they also determine what will count as skill in the sport. Skill at striking a tennis ball with topspin on the backhand is only of value if one plays tennis. Further, relatively minor modifications in the rules can have far reaching effects. For example, if we take the sport of ice hockey, the skills would include skating, puck handling, passing and so on. However, because the game is also typically a contact sport, hockey players need all of those skills and the ability to exhibit them while under intense physical pressure. If the game is played without contact then the skill of responding under this kind of physical pressure is not required, and nor indeed would there be any need for an ability to deliver a body-check.

The next crucial feature of sport is that the activities are competitive. In a sporting contest, contestants compete to see who can perform the given activity better on that day. The subject of competition in sport rightfully deserves a paper on its own. At this stage it is sufficient to make a few crucial points. Competition marks sporting activity out from other forms of recreational physical activity. I may jog for exercise, but if I race, I compete. Second, in the standard form of sport competition there is only one winner – it is a zero-sum game – if we compete and you win – I lose. It is quite possible to set up methods of competing with oneself, perhaps in terms of self-improvement or personal bests, but the standard form of competition is to see who performs best at that sport, that day. In this form of competition one player or team does best, and the others do less well. In this form of competition participants are competing for scarce goods. There can be only one winner.

The competitive nature of sport means that both teams, or players, are striving to win. In fact, if you ask athletes what they are trying to do as they participate in sport, a very common response will be that their objective is to win. However, this focus on winning allows the possibility that people focus on the score and not on the process of playing. The competition for scarce goods is hampered by a logical dissociation between the process of playing and the outcome of winning. The measure of
success (i.e. winning and losing) is not logically connected to how well the game is played.

Scoring systems in sport are created and designed to reflect skill at playing the game. The desired state of affairs is that the player or team that best exhibits the skills of that particular sport on that day, will score more points, and hence will win. The intention is that the best player wins. However, this is not always the case. A freak event could distort the score, one player might cheat undetected, or, more controversially, one player or team could clog up the game and prevent the opponent from displaying superior skill. (This is controversial because it could just be argued that clogging up the game to prevent a display of skill is itself a skill.)

The crucial point, however, is that the score does not always represent how well the participants played that day. This means that it is possible to focus on the outcome, the score, without paying too much attention to the process of playing. If we think that only the score is important we will disregard how we reach the score. That is, it will not matter if we cheat, or win by luck, if the outcome is the only thing that is desired.

But this mistake, and it is the “great mistake” in sport, has important consequences. If we dissociate the score from the process of playing we not only run the risk of increased instances of cheating, but, we also alienate participants from what made sport fun in the first place — the process of playing. The score does not make sense in isolation from the process of playing. The skills exhibited in that process of playing are the skills that are created and made necessary by the rules of that sport. The rules make the game what it is, and they make the score the measure of success. But if we break the rules, we cease to play the game, which makes the score, and the entire process, pointless.

The mistake is to imagine that the score — that is who wins and who loses, makes any sense or has any value divorced from the actual process of playing. Winning is only important because a winning score is supposed to represent who played the game better on the day. Playing the game is completely dependent on the rules of the game concerned. In what follows we will look at some of the ways in which a failure to appreciate the connection of the score to playing the game by the rules lead to particular responses in the face of the moral challenges of sport.6

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**Sport Creates a Realm for Moral Choice**

In sport there are constant opportunities to make moral choices and exhibit moral characteristics. Moral choices involve decisions that display our character and personal values. There are times when these kinds of choices are moral dilemmas which

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6 This is a somewhat simplified statement of a reality which is richer and more complex. The rules of the game form the framework for an agreement between athletes to compete. Included in that agreement are some implicit assumptions about how the rules will be interpreted and acted upon. These implicit assumptions are often referred to as the ethos of the game. For more on this topic see: Butcher, R., Schenider, A., “Fair Play as Respect for the Game.” Journal of the Philosophy of Sport, 1998, Vol. XXV, pp. 1-22.
means having to choose between two (or more) alternatives, each of which is equally unfavourable.

Sport competition provides a wide realm of moral choice. In many sports, at least at the lower levels, there are no officials, so players call their own fouls and shots and otherwise self-regulate. This process provides a constant stream of opportunities for moral choice. Do you call that shot out or in? Do you identify your foul or other error? Even if the game is officiated there are constant choices to be made. Do you play to the referee? That is, do you try to see how much you can get away with? Do you exaggerate the result of physical contact in order to draw fouls? In contact sports the choices extend. These choices in sport are inescapable, and in making these choices we both learn and display who we are. It is easy to see how different attitudes to winning and the process of playing lead to different outcomes as one makes moral choices. If the score is the only thing that matters then we will play to the referee, exaggerate physical contact and so on. If we understand that for the score to make sense it must be connected to the quality of play we will ask ourselves in each case whether the course of action under consideration would be better for the sport if everyone performed it.

The upshot of these fundamental characteristics of sport – that it is created, rule-based, competitive, and necessarily provides a realm for moral choice – is that sport cannot be played or taught in a value neutral fashion. And it is absolutely necessary that we teach the right values and in the right way.

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**Types of Moral Choice for Athletes in Community Sport**

It is possible to identify two broad categories of moral challenge in sport. The first concerns knowledge, the second concerns character.

**Problems of Knowledge – Problems of Right Action**

Sometimes the moral problem in sport consists in deciding what one should do. For example, if you know that your opponent in tennis is weak on her backhand, you will probably play to that weakness and concentrate your shots on her backhand. No moral problem here, just good strategy. But what happens if you know that the opposing quarterback is nursing an injury? While it would be clearly morally wrong to attempt to further injure that player (even if you attempted to do so through the means of fair tackles), would it be wrong to include in your strategy an attempt to exploit that player’s physical weakness? Here the first problem is a problem of knowledge – of knowing what one should do – the subsequent problem of character concerns doing what one knows to be right.

Questions of right action arise in connection with the rules. Athletes are constantly faced with choices concerning following the rules. For instance, in some cases it is expected that you would break the rules and accept a penalty for doing so (the so called “good foul”), but that strategic
rule-breaking may well be morally different from an attempt to break the rules and not get caught, and hence not pay a penalty. Should you ever break the rules intentionally? Does it make a moral difference if you break the rules and accept the penalty?

**Problems of Character -- Looking Toward the Self**

*On Weakness of the Will.* Even if it is perfectly clear what you should do, the next question concerns whether or not you will actually do it. So, even if it is morally clear that you should follow a particular rule in a particular situation, there arises the question of whether or not you will actually do it. In the language of ethics this is the problem of “weakness of the will” which comes from Aristotle’s concept of “akrasia.” In tennis players call their own lines, and the rule is that if there is any doubt about whether or not the ball is in, it is called in (that is, to the benefit of the opponent). But each time there is a close call you are faced with the choice of giving yourself the benefit of the doubt. The question is will you have the strength of will to make the call in your opponent’s favour. It is not always the case that when people have recognized that a particular action is the right thing to do, that they in fact choose to do it. In some cases, other desires (e.g. the selfish desire to win) are stronger than their will to do the right action. This is an example of weakness of will which is a weakness of character.

*On Courage.* Sport tests personal courage in a variety of ways, some obvious and some not so obvious. The obvious test of courage comes in sports that include physical contact, where athletes are expected to play through pain. But all sports demand the courage to put oneself on the line, to try one’s best and run the risk of being found wanting. In some ways a sport such as figure-skating demands the utmost courage. Not only is the ice cruelly hard, and not only are skaters completely unpadded, they also have to perform desperately difficult physical maneuvers, while the harsh gaze of the spotlight shines solely on them. The moral choice each athlete faces concerns the extent to which he or she is prepared to run physical risks. If an athlete gets it wrong by under assessing the risk, it is called rashness. If an athlete gets it wrong by over assessing the risk, it is called cowardliness. Getting the balance for the virtue of courage requires the ability to reason out the risks and the strength of character to take them, or not take them when they fall in the two extremes. This analysis comes from Aristotle and his “doctrine of the mean” in regard to his virtue theory of ethics.

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8 See Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by W.D. Ross, Oxford: The Claredon Press, 1925 or alternatively H. Rackham’s translation, (Loeb)
On Trying One’s Best. We probably need a new word for the highly prized characteristic of trying one’s best. Commitment and perseverance are related, but neither captures the idea entirely. Everyone admires the person who always tries his or her best, at whatever activity he or she is engaged in. The person who tries her best does not shirk from the work required to do well. She is engaged in the enterprise, seeking to understand what is going on and looking for ways to improve. When it comes time to perform she pushes herself to her limit. Sport competition teaches (or can teach) us to try our best. It should be noted that this is one of the characteristics that can be exhibited at every level of ability or competition and is, of course, as valuable outside of sport as within. The choices for each athlete are first how hard to push – that is, the extent to which he or she will commit – and second, the extent to which the person is prepared to do his or her best – and risk being found wanting. If an athlete tries his best, and fails, he has done a very special thing – but, there is nowhere to hide, his best may not be good enough. This kind of choice is about a very positive and enthusiastic kind of character having enough self confidence to know that trying your best and not succeeding does not entail weakness.

On Questions of Commitment and Priority. It is sad fact of human life that our days only contain twenty-four hours and we have only a limited number of days available to us in our lifetime. This means that every choice to do one thing entails a corresponding choice not to something else. If you practice hockey, you will not have time to practice music, or play Nintendo or…. Participation in sport teaches us how to fit sport into a complete life, how to juggle priorities and how to manage our time. The moral choice faced by athletes concerns the way they fit their sport participation into the rest of their lives. The central task for each athlete is to answer “What is the good life?”, which leads to choices that are guided by the athlete’s moral values.

On Looking Towards Others – Relations with Team-mates. Sport can teach the virtues of working together in a common cause. This requires accepting the skills and weaknesses of others and helping them to improve as you strive together. It means accepting that the common cause may require a submersion of self-interest – it doesn’t matter who scores, what matters is that the team plays as well as it can. It also means coming to accept our own place in the team, even if that place does not fit with our initial conceptions or desires. From playing and working together can grow friendships. The

moral choice for athletes is the choice to submerge and transform personal interests into team and sport interests. To what extent is the athlete prepared to sacrifice personal glory, and give that up, for the good of the team or the sport?

On Relations with Coaches. It is a commonplace observation that the coach can play a very special role in the life of a young athlete. The coach interacts with the child in situations that are emotionally intense, and in a manner that often involves physical contact. The coaching relationship allows young people to learn how to learn and creates a new form of authority relationship. This is a powerful but also potentially dangerous relationship. If the coach gets it right, the coaching relationship can be one that nurtures a young person’s sporting and personal development. If the coach gets it wrong, he or she can poison the sport experience and distort personal development. The moral choice for the athlete concerns learning to learn. To what extent is the athlete prepared to leave ego to learn? But, of course, being ready to learn is not a blank cheque. The athlete must remain ready to evaluate the actions of coaches (and the other participants around him or her). Sport can be a breeding ground for abuse precisely because of the position of authority enjoyed by coaches and other sport leaders.

On Relations with Opponents. One of the puzzling truths of sport is that we not only need our opponents, we also need them to play well. Obviously, without opponents there is no competition, and equally, without good opponents there is no good competition. A victory one can be proud of only comes through more skilful play against a skilful opponent playing at or near his or her, or their best. But in such highly contested games it is impossible to tell in advance who will win. In games like that sometimes you will lose. But, and this is the puzzle, it may well be better to lose that tightly-contested, highly-skilled game than to win against a lesser opponent or a team not playing at its best.

In contact sports the relationship with opponents is additionally complicated. Is it possible to try to physically dominate, indeed to try to hurt an opponent in a game that requires vigorous physical contact and still view that person with the respect due to a co-competitor, someone engaged in the same enterprise as oneself – the quest for good sport? We would argue that not only is this respect possible, it is absolutely essential. If you do not view your opponent in a contact sport as someone you need, and someone you need to play well, in order for you to get what you want – a well-played game – then contact in sport becomes just a fight.

By way of summary of this section, sport provides an environment to explore different moral situations and experiment with different moral choices in an environment, where your actions are usually non-critical. If you act with cowardice in a game no one dies, if you do not play your best, all that happens is that you lose. Sport, thus provides an opportunity to learn, and make mistakes, at relatively little personal or social cost.
In each of the areas of moral choice identified above, the “great mistake” will have a powerful influence in deciding what you should do and how you should act. If you mistakenly believe that victory (in the absence of consideration about the quality of play exhibited in achieving it) is the goal, then as you consider what the right action might be, strategic advantage will be the guiding decision-making principle. For questions of character the issue of doing one’s best is subordinated to doing what is required to win. If you happen to be winning, your best is no longer required. Attitudes to winning will also govern relations with other participants. If the victory is all that is important (your victory or the team’s victory?) then team-mates are tools and opponents are enemies. In contrast if victory is only valued because it is the indicator of better play on that day then the focus is on the process of playing and the game itself. This focus on playing gives rise to an attitude to the sport which values sport for its own sake. Valuing sport for its own sake (or respecting the game) is a powerful determinant of behaviour. As you decide what to do, you ask which action would benefit sport, which action would be better for the game if all participants adopted it. This leads away from the zero-sum attitude that if you win I lose, because, if the best player wins a hard-fought, cleanly contested, highly skilled game then all those who play have benefited – we have all won because we have all experienced sport at its best. There are similar consequences for our relations with other participants. Team-mates are no longer tools and opponents are no longer enemies, but rather both are necessary colleagues in a joint pursuit of good sport.

**The Players in Community Sport**

So far we have spoken of the athletes, the young people who come ready to learn, eager to have fun, but as a blank slate upon which will be written a whole host of attitudes – to self, to opponents, to teammates and to sport. But there are many other participants in the system that is community sport. First there are the parents who came with a profound interest in children, but primarily in their own children. Then there are the coaches, frequently there because of their own children’s involvement. The coaches are typically volunteers. Though in the language of volunteering “volun-told” is more accurate. (In discussions of volunteering and volunteer motivation, volunteers typically come to a field because of their interest in that cause or activity. In sport the situation is often rather different. Parents are there because of their interest in their children rather than an interest in the sport itself. They move from the passive role of ferrying children to and from events to being active participants as they get told that it is their turn to be the coach, fundraising representative of whatever. They are the “voluntold.”

**Coaches often start out with very little training, just an intense desire to help their kids get the most out of sport**

victory is all that is important (your victory or the team’s victory?) then team-mates are tools and opponents are enemies. In contrast if victory is only valued because it is the indicator of better play on that day then the focus is on the process of playing and the game itself. This focus on playing gives rise to an attitude to the sport which values sport for its own sake. Valuing sport for its own sake (or respecting the game) is a powerful determinant of behaviour. As you
But what is the task we present to coaches? Is their job to provide a good, exciting, fun, sporting environment in which young people can grow and flourish as players and as people, or is the objective to win? Put any thoughtful, strategic thinking adult in charge of a game where the objective is to win and he or she will try to work out ways of doing just that, and, and this is the crucial point, the means of winning may well be inconsistent with the desire to have programmes that allow all participants to grow and flourish. This means coaches are constantly faced with inconsistent demands.

Finally we can identify those involved in the community sport business. These are the people who make their livings from the existence (and health) of community sport. There are, of course, all those involved with equipment and clothing, but also those whose job it is to ensure that the arenas are safe and clean and that the ice is groomed.

Each participant in sport has a role to play in ensuring that we get this never morally neutral enterprise, which is sport, just right.

Separating Outcome from Process. Not just athletes but all participants can go wrong by separating outcome from process. It is far too easy to divorce the outcome, the score, and hence victory and defeat from the process of playing. It matters that you win or lose, but it also matters how you win and lose. Players, coaches, parents and other spectators all have a constant and continuous role to play in ensuring that this message gets repeatedly reinforced.

Players need to feel that the cheap and easy win is not worth having. Coaches need to be prepared to look past the score in this game to show their athletes (and to feel themselves) that a win by luck is just that, lucky, and so not particularly praiseworthy. They need to be prepared to coach and to model, through their behaviour, the idea that winning is inextricably linked to the process of playing well and that the win without the playing well is incomplete and shallow.

And parents and spectators have a role to play too. They are the ones that know their own children best. They see when the children try, when they slack off. They know when their team is playing to the officials; they know when the team deserved to win, and when it did not.

Being Unrealistic. Sport is a place for dreams. For many children, especially younger children, each time they lace up their skates or put on their gear they dream of their sports heroes and heroines. They dream of being up there, in the big leagues, and on the Olympic podium. That dream is, of course, brutally unrealistic. But that unreality for the child really does not matter, in fact it is a fun part of playing and participating in sport. After all, every player in the big leagues, as a child, dreamt of being there too. But unrealistic expectations and assessments do matter for coaches, parents and spectators.

In the first place we can be unrealistic about the importance of any particular game or play. Of course, we all want to get it right and we all want all the players to play as well as possible. But, we are talking about community sport. What matters in community sport is not the outcome of any
particular game, but rather the lessons in life that are learned by each child as he or she participates.

We are sometimes unrealistic about the significance of sport itself. While we all want participants to enjoy the sport and do well, sport is just one part of a young person’s life. The time spent participating in sport is time not spent in doing other things. Similarly the time spent practicing this sport is time not spent in exploring other sports.

**Being Inconsistent.** Perhaps our biggest area of failure is in failing to match what we do with what we say. This is a problem for all participants in sport, and, of course in many other areas of life too. The examples are all too obvious. Do we as parents espouse a participation/fun approach and then advocate in the playoffs that only the best kids play? Would we claim to support the referees and coaches and then verbally abuse them from the stands? Do we espouse good, clean, fair play, and then reward only winning? We want our cake and to eat it too. We want good healthy programmes – where our kids can grow and develop and where they always win.

So far we have concentrated almost exclusively on the negative, on the ways in which we can get sport wrong, on the “great mistake”. But that is not the soul of sport. The soul of sport is joyous and fun. The next section will explore the power of the fun of sport.

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A **Positive, Values-based Approach** is More Successful than a Negative/Punitive Approach

One of the great puzzles in moral philosophy is the question:”Why be moral?” Ethics or morality is often viewed as a set of rules which have the effect of ruling out certain methods of getting what you want. So, I might have the desire to own an S series Jaguar, but the method of theft to acquire it is ethically unacceptable. It is not unethical to want a Jag, just unethical to steal to acquire it. The obvious question is: Why should I follow the rules?” It is clear that the obvious answer: “Because you might get caught,” is at best only part of the story.

In practical terms the effectiveness of “you might get caught” is limited by the probability that you will actually get caught. If the rule was never enforced there is no practical reason why one should follow it. The answer is also inadequate in ethical terms. The motivation of fear (fear of the consequences of getting caught) is not in itself a moral motivation. Fear of consequences is just self-interest, and not a morally praiseworthy motivation at all. What we want in ethics is the right action for the right reason. Fear may bring the right action, but it does so for the wrong reason.

This approach to ethics can be applied to sport. The objective is to get athletes to perform the right action for the right reason. Fair play as respect for the game provides a theory for working out what the right action would be, and a motivation for performing it. Fair play is grounded in a
love and respect for sport, so right action flows from a love of sport.

**Sport is Fun**

This formal description of sport and the dry enumeration of the opportunities for moral choice it offers are only a small part of the story of community sport. The crucial message of sport, and the thing that gives sport its life and character, is that sport is fun. Governments may invest in sport because of its ability to help develop good citizens and as a means of promoting civil society, but children, and for the most part their parents, participate because sport is fun.

At the risk of analyzing away what is so much fun in sport, it is possible to describe some of the ways in which sport is fun. First, there is the joy of movement. Sports are games, but they are, crucially, physical games. It is fun to move the human body through space; it brings joy to extend and explore one’s physical capacities. Second, there is the joy that comes from the mastery of new skills. We enjoy learning and then mastering new physical skills. Sports are physical games – and they are marked out from other forms of physical activity because they are competitive. We are the sorts of beings that like to compete and test ourselves against others performing the same activity. Sport, of course, also offers opportunities for the fun that comes with comradeship and a joint commitment to a shared enterprise.

This is the fun of sport from the perspective of the player. There is fun in sport from the perspective of the parent too. In the first place, parents are often dragged to their children’s sporting activities because the children want to be there. What happens is a transformation of the parent’s interest as they see the joy their children feel as they participate. Second, from the parent’s perspective, sport offers a means of personal growth for their children. Parents actively want opportunities for their children to demonstrate commitment and courage, and to learn to enjoy the process of mastering new skills. Sport offers parents the opportunity to teach the skill of working together, and graciousness in both defeat and victory.

Sport provides both the challenges and the means of meeting those challenges. Sport necessarily presents moral choices but it can also, if properly understood, provide a set of tools grounded in the love of sport itself, which can be used to teach athletes how to compete fairly and to the limits of their ability, for their lifetimes. But there are choices to be made.

**Choices – the Sport We Want**

In the introduction we identified two primary choices for community sport. The first concerned the relation of sport to fair play. Is the goal of sport victory – or victory
as a result of a process – the process of the well-played game. The choice here is not really in the answer. We would be surprised to see people consistently defend the view that in community sport the score was all that matters. No, here the choice is about action. If we do not want sport that is solely about outcome, and if the default tendency in sport is to end up viewing sport in that way – what will we do about it? Are we prepared to intervene consistently, forcefully and throughout the system to ensure that victory is seen as meaningless in the absence of a well-played, fair game? What will we do?

The second question concerns the primary objective of community sport. Is the primary objective of community sport the development of character, or is the primary objective of community sport enjoyment of sport itself? For instance, programmes like Scouts and Guides, and Duke of Edinburgh’s Award programme, are explicitly intended for the development of character and citizenship. Is sport like this? Or is community sport for fun, exercise and fitness, participation, sporting excellence and so on?

In the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport’s 2002 public opinion survey, community sport was ranked as the second highest influence on young people’s values after the family, and 93% agreed that it was critically or definitely important that community sport promotes positive values.

Should community sport programmes emphasize character development through participation or the pursuit of sport for its own sake?

Community sport is at a crossroads, at a place where choices need to be made. If left to its own devices the natural drift will be towards a strictly performance-based, zero-sum sport system that looks like a miniature version of professional sport. Are we prepared to stop that from happening? And then, beyond that, do we, as the Canadian community, wish to deliberately use sport as a positive tool for the good. Do we intend to exploit the power of sport to achieve social objectives, or are we content to promote sport for its own sake and take the ancillary benefits as they come?

There are consequences as we go forward. If Canadians decide that community sport needs to be protected, that it cannot be allowed to become a performance-based, miniature version of professional sport, then we must be prepared to intervene to make that happen. And, if we are prepared to intervene then we must be sure of the objectives we are seeking to achieve. Is the sport we want sport that is used as a positive tool for good, an approach which may weaken the integrity of sport itself, or is the sport we want sport for its own sake, the pursuit of which may limit the ways in which we can use it for the good?
The interest in ethics is certainly not new. Socrates was perhaps the first to approach this topic with vigour 2,500 years ago when he questioned whether the unexamined life was worth living. However, despite its longevity, the fundamental ethical question, What should I do?, is still left unanswered in a definitive way. While religious perspectives clearly state the fundamental nature and purpose of our intended behaviour as humans, the philosophical view tends to be a more complex shade of ethical grey. The perception of ethics in sport is equally ambiguous.

The net that is cast by the term sport is immense. Depending upon the context, it is perceived to be a means to profit financially, a source of entertainment, a medium for fitness, an avenue for social interaction and intervention, a tool to promote patriotism, personal development or simply as the natural and impulsive act of play. Despite the many sub-sectors of sport that are diverse and often mutually exclusive, the common link with each is that sport is a vehicle toward something (e.g., profit, friends, health). Of the many outcomes that we perceive sport to foster, moral character is among the most important (Decima, 2002). This particular goal has come under considerable scrutiny in recent years as unethical conduct by athletes, coaches, and administrators have made worldwide headlines. The initial response from Canada was the now famous Dubin Inquiry in which sport was deemed to be in a “state of moral crisis”. The outcome of the Dubin Inquiry and other international initiatives (e.g., the World Anti-Doping Agency) was a heightened awareness of unethical behaviour in sport and a desire to reverse what seemed to be an unfortunate trend.

The dominant strategy to improve the state of ethics in sport has been thus far to combat the use of banned performance-enhancing substances at the elite level. While this is important work, it addresses a symptom - not a cause. The cause of any behaviour is a result of values, purposes, and ethical knowledge or ignorance. These three components and their interrelation have received relatively little attention in the debate to improve the state of sport. This is curious because in other sectors (e.g., business, health, and law) the role of ethics has been much more thoroughly examined.
The study and application of ethics has created a variety of approaches to the basic questions of what should I do, what do I value, and why do I value it? These varied approaches are a function of the multitude of purposes and values of the many sectors of our society. Despite the differences in the mandates of these sectors and the resulting approaches to ethical behaviour, there may be some strategies that are relevant to the community sport context that could enhance ethical and value-based behaviour.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, the strategies that other sectors, active in ethical initiatives (e.g., business), have used to develop and enhance ethical conduct will be identified and discussed. Once this survey is complete, an analysis of the relevance of these strategies will be carried out to determine to what extent they can be incorporated into the realm of community sport. This analysis will include an exploration of the values and purposes of each sector, with the focus on practical considerations.

**What We Ought to do and Why We Do It?**

**Ethics**

Ethics provides us with the tools to determine whether or not we should do a certain action and the extent to which a past action should have been done (Figure 1). While there are many different approaches to the question, What should I do?, it is possible to simplify matters by discussing ethics in terms of means versus ends orientation (see Appendix A for a more detailed discussion). Means-oriented ethics focuses on the principles upon which we base our behaviour. Rules, policies, commandments, and codes of ethics/conduct form the parameters of our actions (e.g., the Code of Ethics for the Coaching Association of Canada). From this perspective the outcome of our behaviour is less important than how we behave. In contrast, ends-oriented ethics emphasizes the consequences of action: the manner in which we perform the action and our intentions are of secondary importance. The ethical ends justify the means in this approach.

![Figure 1: The role of ethics and values in behaviour](image-url)

While these two perspectives generally provide the basics in ethical theory, a third approach can be considered when making ethical choices. This approach is geared toward the individual being capable of making decisions based upon free will and being fully responsible for the outcomes of each and every choice for all people concerned. Personal authenticity and non-conformity are the watchwords for this ethical view. An individual adopting this
ethical stance cannot rely on societal or organizational rules or norms to make choices – all decisions are made based upon one’s genuine belief in what is good in each situation.

VALUES

While ethics tells us what we ought to do, it does not explain why we do it. The study of values can assist us in this. Values can be defined as concepts of the desirable with a motivating force. In other words, values somehow move us to act in a particular way. If a value does not cause one to act, then it can be concluded that value is not valued. For example, if a coach says that he/she values fair play and demonstrates this in practice and competition, then it is truly valued. However, if the coach cheats, then the value of fair play is, in fact, not valued.

Another way of looking at the concept of value is to determine the extent to which it is instrumental to another value or terminal in itself. For example, a person may value jogging because it leads to a healthy body; another may value it simply for its own sake with no ulterior motive. The former views jogging as an instrumental value; the latter views it terminally. Clarifying the instrumental and terminal values of sport is critical if we are to know how to set policy and strategic direction. If sport is itself a terminal value then the implications for its influence on moral development and character building, for example, need not concern us and effort needs only to be placed on the technical components of the required skill-set. If, however, sport is perceived as an instrumental value, then what is it that sport leads to and how do we ensure that this occurs?

PURPOSE

Purpose refers to what the organization intends to do. Purpose clarifies organizational behaviour individually and collectively, and is based upon what the organization values, instrumentally and terminally. The purpose of a school is to teach because education is valued; the purpose of business is to make a profit because economic wealth is valued and so on. Understanding the value behind the purpose is fundamental if one wants to set any strategic direction. Without this information, an organization is adrift and will move in the direction of each and every wave.

If we wish to take control of our own fate and explicitly set a direction, we need to firmly establish the values and purposes of community sport (Figure 2).

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**Values:**
- What does my sector value and why is it valued?
- What are the instrumental values? (e.g., efficiency, effectiveness, productivity)
- What are the terminal values? (e.g., economic wealth)

**Purpose:**
- What is the purpose of this sector? (e.g., to make a profit)

**Ethics:**
- How should I behave?
- Are the means, ends, and choices of this sector’s values and purposes ethical? (e.g., to abide by the law and professional and organisational codes)

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*Figure 2: Relation between values, purpose, and ethics*
Cross-Sector Strategies for Ethics and Values: What is Everyone Else Doing and Why?

In this section what other sectors are doing to develop and enhance their ethical environment will be explored. The sectors to be considered are rather broad in scope; however, this discussion will provide a sense of what is being done, how effective these strategies are, as well as the extent to which these strategies have become part of the institutional structure within these sectors. For the purposes of this paper, the following sectors, whose efforts to develop ethical conduct and decision-making are well documented, will be considered:

Business;
Health Care; and
Law.

For each of these sectors, the purpose, values, and specific ethical strategies will be investigated. Regardless of the sector, there are generally three formal means by which ethical behaviour is encouraged: they are codes of ethics, models of ethical decision-making, and ethics education.

Codes provide a variety of functions for a profession. The most obvious function is to set internal guidelines for individual behaviour. Dean (1992) suggests that “codes are meant to translate the more formal philosophical theories of ethics into a set of guidelines that can be applied to the day-to-day decision making” (p. 285). Codes also serve as a mechanism to inform the public of the profession’s intent to be ethical and to warrant the trust of the patient/client/public. Codes function to make individuals aware of their ethical duty to their profession and the stakeholders to whom they are responsible (Somers, 2001; Valentine and Fleischman, 2002).

Models of ethical decision-making provide more specific guidance for individuals when confronted with ethical dilemmas. While most models attempt to incorporate professional duty as a variable in the decision-making, this is only one variable in the process (e.g., Au and Wong, 2000; Malloy, Ross, and Zakus, 2003). Examples of other variables include the perceived importance of outcomes of a particular behaviour, organizational culture, and the degree of social agreement with a course of action.

Ethics education is a common means through which ethical behaviour is presented and encouraged in each of these sectors. However, the existence, form, and content vary dramatically.

**Business**

The purpose of business is to make profit for owners/shareholders. This purpose is based upon the terminal value (for the business sector) of seeking economic wealth. Instrumental values for this sector would include efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity – all of which lead to the terminal value of economic wealth. As a result of the focus on these values, behaviour in this sector is predominantly outcome-oriented. This emphasis on the outcome of business activity (i.e., profit) has
been a chronic concern and source of scepticism by clients in particular and the public in general (e.g., the recent Enron scandal). The response from the business community (including the business academics and consultants) has been to place more emphasis on the ethical means to profit and downplay the profit-at-all-cost mentality prevalent in much of the business community. This emphasis has taken the form of two strategies: codes of ethics and decision-making models. Recent research suggests that over 85% of businesses in Canada have an ethical code of some form (Schwartz, 2002).

While codes of ethics appear to be rather prevalent, the extent to which they are effective is a continuing debate in the business ethics literature. For example, Brief, Dukerich, Brown, and Brett (1996) found that codes of ethics do not reduce the likelihood of unethical behaviour in a corporate context. McCabe, Trevino, and Butterfield (1996) demonstrated that the very existence of a code of ethics was associated with lower levels of self-reported unethical behaviour. One of the major drawbacks of the use of ethical codes in this sector is the lack of professional sanctions for those that do act unethically. There is a sense of acting as a “professional” in this sector, however, there is not general certification and no enforceable code outside the specific organisation other than what is limited to the code of domestic and international law. As a result, codes function without “teeth” and operate as guides for behaviour only.

Unlike the other sectors, business has shown great interest in the development of decision-making models to assist individuals to make better ethical choices. These models take on one of three themes in their design. The first type considers the process or the stages one must go through to make an ethical decision. An example of this is application of Rest’s model (1986) in which the decision maker is to consider the following four components: 1) recognition of the problem, 2) judgement (is it ethically charged), 3) intention (to make or not make an ethical choice), and 4) behaviour (the actual action taken as a result of steps 1-3). Models that focus on the process are important and offer solid guidance regarding the actual stages of decision-making; however, they do not address the multitude of factors that influence the process.

The second type of decision model focuses exclusively on the variables of ethical choices yet does not address specifically the process to be followed (e.g., Hitt, 1990). The variables that these models address include the decision-maker’s own values and environment, and the macro variables of the economy, politics, technology, and society. Theorists contend that the knowledge of these variables will enable the individual to have a better sense of the overall circumstances in which the decision is being made and therefore come to a better decision for all involved.
The third type of model that is being presented, debated, and researched in the business sector incorporates both the decision-making process and the variables that influence the process. These models link the impact of variables upon the specific stages of decision-making (e.g., Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Loe, Ferrell, and Mansfield, 2000). Where these models gain in comprehensiveness and their ability to make sense of the complexity of ethical decision-making in business environments, they tend to lose in practicality.

The degree to which codes and decision-making models are effective is unclear. In a recent article by Schwartz (2002), 41% of the studies he reviewed indicated that codes were effective, 12% found that the relationship between codes and ethical behaviour was weak, and 47% found that codes were not effective at all. With regard to models of ethical decision-making, there is little evidence to support their widespread or institutional use. Presumably those that do follow the models will make better ethical decisions. However, having the information via models or educational seminars and using it are two different things (i.e., “one can lead a horse to water but…”).

One of the most obvious success stories regarding codes of ethics and organizational behaviour is that of the Johnson and Johnson Company in their reaction to tainted Tylenol capsules in 1982. At that time there were a number of deaths attributed to strychnine poisoning in the capsules. Johnson and Johnson reacted immediately, against the advice of their legal advisors, and removed 32 million bottles of Tylenol at a cost of $100 million. The action taken by this company was consistent with its ethics credo. Fritzsche (1997) made the following observation:

While Johnson and Johnson runs a very decentralized company, it fosters a strong culture to guide management’s actions via the Credo, which serves as a compass for managers. This was evident in the Tylenol crisis…Larry Foster, vice president for public relations, said they had no choice but to pull Tylenol from the market. Not to do so would have been a violation of the Credo. “It would have been hypocrisy at its best or worse”. (p. 132)

In stark contrast is the case of the Ford Motor Company’s faulty production of Pinto cars and trucks in the 1960s. Ford had manufactured the Pinto in response to increased competition from foreign small car sales. The Pinto had a defect that caused it to explode upon rear-end collisions. In response, Ford calculated the cost in dollars of two strategies: a) recall and repair or b) do nothing. To recall the cars to replace the needed part would have cost Ford approximately $137.5 million; to do nothing and face the legal suits of injured drivers and their families was estimated at $49.5 million – this included an estimate of $200,725 per fatality (Shaw and Barry, 1989). In deciding to do nothing, Ford clearly was viewing consumers only as a
means to the corporate end of increasing profits. The decision that Ford took was clearly unethical. It failed to adhere to accepted notions of the worth of a human life and in the end caused far greater damage to the organization than would have incurred had it repaired the faulty Pinto. While the short-term outcome was a saving of $88 million, the long-term costs continue to plague Ford more than three decades after the incident – it is perceived as a “classic” case of unethical corporate conduct. These two examples demonstrate the important interplay between means-oriented and ends-oriented ethical decision-making when addressing specific situations.

**Health Care**

The purpose of the health care sector is to treat individuals with physical or cognitive pathology. The terminal value upon which this is based is health. Instrumental values include scientific exploration, patient care, etc. The value of health in many ways supersedes other values, as the human (as a biological organism) cannot flourish in other areas to the fullest potential without health. As a result of this acute and chronic interest in health, the behaviour of the professionals in this sector comes under significant scrutiny. The patient/client under the care of a health care professional generally perceives himself/herself to be in a vulnerable position in which his or her health (and life!) is completely in the hands of the attending professional. As a result of this perceived or de facto state of dependence and power differential, the degree of trust and confidentiality expected from the health care professional is immense and imperative. In order to ensure that health care professionals are worthy of the trust that society confers on them, they have used the strategy of self-sanction. This sanctioning has taken the form of codes of ethics (beginning with Hippocrates some 2,500 years ago).

In Canada, each of the health care professions has established codes of ethics that are to guide the behaviour of individuals who have been admitted into the particular profession. These codes identify for the individual the duty that they are obliged to follow by virtue of being a professional. Maintenance of one’s status in these professions is contingent upon accepting and following the particular code of ethics. Failure to do so results in the loss of the rights and privileges associated with the profession. Many will argue that if not for this power to remove the employment privileges of an individual who fails to comply, a code of ethics is ineffective.

Within the sector of health care, there are numerous codes that differ in terms of
ethical content, design, and sheer volume of statements (Malloy and Hadjistavropoulos, 2002). Perhaps the most comprehensive, and possibly the most effective, of the codes is that of the Canadian Psychological Association. Not only is it the most detailed code of ethics among health care professionals, but also it provides the psychologist with a ranking of principles to assist practitioners when ethical principles conflict in decision-making. A further and critical distinction between the professions is the degree to which the codes and ethics education, in general, form part of the academic requirements of nurses, physicians and psychologists. All medical students in Canada are exposed to ethics as part of their medical curriculum, however there is significant variation from university to university regarding the number of instructional hours devoted to this topic. In contrast, both psychologists (clinical) and nurses have intensive instruction in ethics (CPA, 2000; CNA, 1997).

The effectiveness of codes in the health sector is undetermined scientifically. However, as these codes tend to carry significant weight in terms of the admittance to and continuation of professional status in various associations (e.g., Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Nursing Association, Canadian Psychological Association), they are more likely to be adopted personally as part of the socialization and educational processes of the sector. Kluge (1999) explains that:

these bodies have the legal power to enforce their rulings on members who have been found guilty of an infraction against them, by striking them from the roles of individuals allowed to practice, or by levying a fine or extracting some other form of punishment. (p. 513)

The obligation to maintain the public trust is immense as the various health professions are, by definition, monopolies of health care service and knowledge. Codes of ethics and their place within educational certification reflect this moral responsibility. As the issue at stake in this sector is health and life itself, the power and influence of these codes may be more profound than those found in the other non-regulated sectors such as business.

The use of models of ethical decision-making to reinforce codes of ethics is also part of the educational content for many health care professionals, particularly for nurses and psychologists. For example, the Canadian Nursing Association (1997) promotes three models of ethical decision-making, any one of which could be employed by a nurse to resolve an ethical dilemma. The first model, called the “Circle Method”, instructs the nurse to first identify the dilemma, the people, and the ethical components involved. Then the nurse is to conduct an evaluation and clarification of a variety of variables such as ethical principles, personal values/beliefs, the values/beliefs of others, etc. After this phase of evaluation and clarification, the nurse is prepared to act and then review his or her behaviour in order to carry forward lessons learned. The second model, termed the “Clinical Ethics Grid System”, provides the nurse with four components to guide ethical decision-making. The components include the following: 1. Medical Indications
(e.g., prognosis, diagnosis, and history), 2. Patient Preference (e.g., instructions to the medical staff and family if the patient is unable to respond), 3. Quality of Life (e.g., prospects with and without treatment), and 4. Contextual Factors (e.g., family, financial, religious issues). The third approach advocated by the CNA, “A Guide to Moral Decision-making”, parallels the more traditional process of ethical decision-making used in the business ethics sector. It includes the following eight stages:

1) Recognizing the moral dimension, 2) Who are the interested parties and what are their relationships, 3) What values are involved, 4) Weigh the benefits and burdens, 5) Look for analogous cases, 6) Discuss with relevant others, 7) Does this decision accord with legal and organizational rules?, and 8) Am I comfortable with this decision? (pp. 60-61)

Despite the fact that the codes of ethics in the health care sector seem to be the primary tool being used to develop and maintain ethical behaviour, decision-making models are also an important part of the educational system for these professionals. Perhaps the advantage that the health care sector enjoys over the business sector is that the audience is captive for ethics education, whereas for the non-certified “professions” in the business realm, ethics is far from a mandatory component for participation.

As mentioned earlier, of all the codes of ethics in the Canadian health care context, the Canadian Psychological Association’s (CPA) document is by far the most detailed. It provides the psychologist with principles, value statements, and standards of ethical conduct. In addition to the content of the codes, the CPA provides a ranking of the principles in order to assist the decision-maker when they conflict. For example, when the principle respect for the dignity of persons is in conflict with the principle of responsibility to society, the former is to be chosen over the latter. Interestingly, the American equivalent of the CPA does not provide such a hierarchy to its principles of ethical practice, although there has been some interest expressed in adopting the Canadian model (Hadjistavropoulos and Malloy, 1999). The CPA hierarchy is as follows:

- Principle I: Respect for the dignity of persons
- Principle II: Responsible caring
- Principle III: Integrity in relations
- Principle IV: Responsibility to society

The following hypothetical but plausible example demonstrates application of this hierarchy in practice. A psychologist is treating a patient with a unique psychopathology and realizes that she has uncovered a significant variable thus far unknown to research in treating a particular mental illness. She asks the patient if he would be willing to allow her observations of him to become part of a scientific publication. He refuses to let this information become public despite her assurances that his identity will remain anonymous. The psychologist is caught between Principle I and IV, that is between
her responsibility to respect the dignity of persons and her responsibility to society.

The CPA Code of Ethics provides guidance for this psychologist because of its hierarchy of principles. The choice is clear: the psychologist should not report the data even though it may help others with the similar illness.

**LAW**

The purpose of the legal sector is to uphold the law. It is based upon the terminal value of a just and ordered society. Instrumental values include respect for the law, judicial process, and various rights and freedoms. As such it is fundamentally a duty-based sector. The means to accomplish this purpose is full knowledge of the law through the educational requirements for all members of this sector from politicians to judges, lawyers, and police officers. However, the extent to which ethics is a mandatory aspect of the legal profession’s educational curriculum varies from province to province and university to university (Law Society of Saskatchewan, personal communication, February, 2003).

Specific ethical codes of conduct operate as secondary sources of guidance (Backof and Martin, 1991). For example, the National Council of the Canadian Bar Association has its Code of Professional Conduct (1987) that outlines a variety of obligations of lawyers, such as, Integrity, Competence and Quality of Service, Advising Clients, Confidential Information, Impartiality, and Conflict of Interest Between Clients. It is expected that every lawyer is well aware of this code of conduct as a member of the legal profession. The Law Society of Manitoba states that:

In Canada, the provincial legislatures have entrusted to the legal profession through its governing bodies responsibility for maintaining standards of professional conduct and for disciplining lawyers who fail to meet them. Generally, the preparation and publication of codes of ethics and professional conduct have been left to the profession. It is a responsibility that must be accepted and carried out by the profession as a whole. ([http://www.lawsociety.mb.ca/code_and_rules/code_of_conduct/preface.htm](http://www.lawsociety.mb.ca/code_and_rules/code_of_conduct/preface.htm))

The legal profession, like that of the health care sector, is bound by professional obligation to be aware of and to adhere to their particular code of conduct. While ethics education is inconsistent across the country, there is a firm expectation that ethical conduct is demonstrated and unethical behaviour is reason to be disbarred from the profession. The effectiveness of the Law Society’s code or of any particular law school’s inclusion of ethics in the legal curriculum is unknown.

However, there is certainty that lawyers are aware of their obligations to know and understand their Code of Professional Conduct.

An additional and effective resource for lawyers is to send written briefs of ethical dilemmas to the law society’s various publications and request other lawyers to respond and give guidance. For example,
the Law Society of Saskatchewan publishes the Bencher’s Digest that provides lawyers with the opportunity to open debate and receive advice based upon the law and on the professional code of conduct on a variety of ethical issues in its Ethics Rulings section.9

Under the heading “Ethics Rulings”, case studies are presented (facts) and rulings by the Ethics Committee are given (rulings). The following is an example taken from the January 2003 issue of Bencher’s Digest:

Chapter XIV—“Advertising, Solicitation and Making Legal Services Available” — Advertising Cumulative Years of Experience – December 2002.

**Facts:**

A member inquired as to lawyers advertising “cumulative” years of experience among lawyers in an office.

**Ruling:**

The Committee is of the opinion that it could be misleading to the public to advertise that several members of a firm have 50 years of experience, particularly when it seems to indicate that the members of the firm each have 50 years of experience in the Supreme Court of Canada… The Committee would like to advise the membership that this type of advertisement could indeed be misleading, that this practice is not condoned by the Law Society of Saskatchewan, and that members should not do this in future advertisements.

(http://www.lawsociety.sk.ca/NewLook/mPublications/publications.htm )

9 Interestingly, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) is currently operating in a similar manner with its Ethical Issues Review Panel.

Ethics in the legal sector is critical yet appears to be perceived as an implicit assumption that need not go on beyond knowledge of the Code of Conduct. In other words, because lawyers are trained in the fundamental principle of justice, they are arguably trained in ethics and no further educational requirements that focus specifically on ethics are necessary. Unlike business, the legal profession’s terminal value is justice, which involves a strong focus on means-oriented ethics. This may explain why there appears to be less emphasis on using strategies such as ethical decision-making models to enhance ethical conduct in this sector.

**Summary**

Ethics can be perceived from three fundamental perspectives with emphasis on the ends, the means, and on the individual’s freedom and responsibility. Why we behave in any one (or more) of these three perspectives is based upon what we value. What we value establishes our more immediate purposes individually and organizationally. In this very brief overview of three distinct sectors in our society (business, health, and law), it was shown that the nature of values and purposes differ dramatically from one sector to another. As a function of these differences, there is variation in the manner by which ethical conduct is enhanced and maintained. The ends-oriented business realm relies on ethical decision-making models in order for individuals to respond to ethical dilemmas as specific situations arise; it employs codes of ethics to a lesser extent because of the lack of “professional accreditation” across
this sector. Health and law, by virtue of their professionalization, rely heavily on codes of ethics and provide, to a greater or lesser extent, educational opportunities that ensure members of the professions are aware of and understand the code. These means-oriented professions demand adherence to profession-specific guidelines that are self-sanctioning and self-defining.

In considering the apparent linkage between values, purposes, and ethics in the business, health, and law sectors, the questions explored in the final section of this paper are:

What is the purpose of community sport?

Upon what value is this purpose based?

Can the ethics strategy for community sport be borrowed from other sectors, or must it be rooted in its own values and purposes?

Relevance and Application to Sport: So What?

From the foregoing, it should be evident that the purposes and values of various sectors seem to correlate with the approaches taken to guide and/or enforce ethical behaviour. Determining the purposes and values (instrumental and terminal) of business, health, or law appears to be a relatively simple exercise and may meet with little or no debate. However the same question asked of sport reveals a much more complex and even explosive response. In a similar sense that we become confused about the definition and purpose of art or time, sport elicits an array of possibilities. When asked what the concept of time was, St. Augustine is to have replied, “If I am not asked, I know; if I am asked, I know not” (Kennick, 1965, p. 4). To get to the root of ‘What is sport?’, it is necessary to clarify what sub-sector of sport is at issue because, despite the commonality of the game or activity played, there may be precious little similarity of purpose and value among these sub-sectors. For example, the purpose of professional hockey is to make a profit for the shareholder by providing entertainment for ticket purchasers; its value is economic wealth – it is a business. In contrast, the purpose of community-based hockey has nothing to do with profit – its purposes and values are much more complex and ill defined. Consequently, the means to instil ethical behaviour in community-based sport is also ill defined. Further, importing a business, health care, or legal strategy to enhance ethical behaviour in sport may be not only unrelated but also and ultimately ineffective.

Sport and Codes of Ethics

The application of codes of ethics to sport would not be a new strategy as they have existed for quite some time in a variety of sport contexts, from administration to coaching at the local and national level (e.g., the Code of Ethics for the Canadian...
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Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (CAHPERD), and the Canadian Professional Coaches Code of Ethics). While, the form and content of these codes vary dramatically, the similarity among all is that they are not enforceable. They act as guidelines only because, similar to the business sector, there is no professional association to which all belong. This is not to suggest that therefore codes in sport do not serve a useful function. It does point out that, unlike codes in the legal and health sectors, sport codes lack the power to admit individuals to a profession and the power to sanction those who fail to abide by the organization’s/profession’s standards of conduct.

**Ethical Models**

The application of models of ethical decision-making to the sport context in general would be a positive step to assist individuals in making better choices. Most of the models that have been developed in the business context could be adapted to suit a variety of sport situations and be extremely helpful in providing a wider scope of variables to consider than the usual “bottom-line”. Currently, there are few models of ethical decision-making developed in sport contexts. Zeigler’s (1984) triple play approach is perhaps the first attempt to provide theoretical guidance using concepts from Mill, Kant, and Aristotle. Malloy et al. (2003) developed a model that includes philosophical and psychological theory, as well as various micro and macro variables that influence a seven stage decision-making process. While these models and those developed in other contexts (e.g., business) may be helpful for ethical decision-making in sport, they are ethics tools that only work if utilized by an individual or by an organization insisting on certain ethical protocols for decisions.

**Ethics Education**

Whether we are dealing with the communication of ethical codes to the membership or encouraging them to employ various decision-making strategies in order to make better ethical choices, we are talking about ethics education. It is here that the emphasis needs to be placed if we wish to enhance the climate and the outcomes of sport at all levels, not the least of which is community sport.

Having said this though, ethics education in sport is rare at the curriculum level in universities (e.g., 25% of Canadian universities offer ethics courses [Malloy, 1992]) and equally atypical at the volunteer level. For example, the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) offers Leadership and Ethics as one of 20 modules in its level 4/5 of certification. However, there is no mandatory component in levels 1 through 3 – the levels of community sport. The core value (as demonstrated through action) of the NCCP is coaching skill and not moral
development through sport at these lower levels. If moral development was a core value, then it would be a required part of the curricula for each and every level of certification. The outcome then is that the development of skill to compete is well in hand at the community level as a function of NCCP while the development of the skill to teach ethical conduct in and through sport is untapped by volunteer coaches and by graduates of our sport-related academic institutions (i.e., faculties of kinesiology).

Employing codes of ethics, models of ethical decision-making, and ethics education generally in sport is a positive initiative. However, these strategies need to be designed with values and purposes in mind in order for them to be maximally effective. Discussing ethical theory or developing ethical codes is worthy of intellectual challenge, but impractical if not guided by specific values and directed to particular contexts (i.e., community sport).

**Instrumental and Terminal Values of Community Sport.**

Clearly there are numerous core, intended, adopted, and weak values in sport and these have been discussed in various forums for decades (e.g., Blackhurst, Schneider, and Strachan, 1991; Davis, 1961; Decima, 2002; Holland and Davis, 1965; Williams, 1932; Zeigler, 1964). Perhaps where the confusion lies is the clarification and/or recognition of what values are instrumental and what are terminal or as Aristotle (1992) termed, the real versus the apparent good. For example, is the value of winning an instrumental or a terminal value? If it is instrumental, what does it lead to? If it is terminal, then the maligned belief that one must win at all costs seems to be justified. Is our dilemma in sport the result of a lack of recognition of the terminal values in sport and an overemphasis on instrumental ones? Is it that we are not thinking through the phenomenon of sport to its logical and final outcome? Are we stuck in the mire of intermediate values and thus unable to appreciate the real good of sport? Until we can identify what the terminal value or real good of community sport is, we cannot develop codes, models, or educational strategies. Aristotle (1992) stated this clearly in the following: “Will not the knowledge of it [the good], then, have great influence on life? Shall we not, like archers who have a mark to aim at, be more likely to hit upon what is right?” (p.328).

**Conclusion**

Values, purposes, and ethical strategies differ in all sectors of society to a greater or lesser extent. The key to ethical success in the business, health, and law sectors has been in the linkage, interdependence, and compatibility of these three variables. Sport, as discussed above, is a very complex phenomenon and the identification of values and purposes is a difficult task. However, if the leaders in community sport wish to enhance the ethical climate, great care must be taken to uncover the values of this sub-sector of sport and to identify and distinguish the instrumental from the terminal and the core from the intended, adopted, and weak values. Just as community sport differs from the business,
health and law sectors as well as elite and professional sport sub-sectors in its instrumental and terminal values and purposes, there are unique aspects within each individual community sport setting. For example, the demands of inner city youth sport programs in Montreal and Halifax will differ from programming on a First Nation’s reserve in Alberta. Each community therefore must be able to explore what it values, whether these are instrumental or terminal, and then be able to develop the means through which ethical behaviour in sport can be fostered based on these values. This requires community sport leaders to perform value audits of their particular context. Once this is accomplished, then, and only then, can they begin the task of developing codes of ethics for players, coaches, and volunteers, as well as ethics educational programs that include appropriate models of ethical decision-making (incorporating duty-, consequence-, or freedom/responsibility-oriented ethical approaches).

Figure 3 provides one strategy that could be used by community leaders to identify and link the appropriate values, purposes, and ethics of community sport. The first steps involve establishing the core instrumental and terminal values of community sport. Unlike other sectors in which these values are relatively clear, leaders in community sport must take the time and considerable effort to reflect deeply upon the ultimate reasons for the existence of community sport. While this reflection is intellectually challenging, it should not be left exclusively to the philosopher or the academic to do this work for the community. Every parent involved in this community of sport has the ability and the responsibility to consider, philosophize, and express what they believe should be the value, purpose, and the ethical climate of the sports in which their children participate.

When identified, the core instrumental and terminal values of sport need to be given public recognition and public commitments. These values then must become part of the natural day-to-day policy development and decision-making processes of community sport programming, aims, and objectives. In addition, the messages communicated to the athlete/child must be consistent with and support these values.
Phase I: Value Audit (what do we value and why?)

1. Identify the values of community sport that actually translate into behaviour
   - Example, to develop respect for others.
2. Distinguish between core, intended, adopted, and weak values.
   - Respect is a core value if it will be acted upon regardless of the circumstance. Respect is an intended value if it is used generally yet may be overlooked based upon circumstance; Respect is an adopted value if it is used only when required by the Association; Respect is a weak value if it is spoken yet not acted upon.
3. Among the core values, identify which are instrumental and which, if any, are terminal.
   - Respect is one of the terminal values that will be pursued when sport is used as a means through which respect is achieved.
   - An example of an instrumental value leading to the terminal value of Respect could be “Do Not Criticize the Referee”.
4. If terminal values are not identified in stage 3, then the committee must explore what their ultimate end for participants in community sport ought to be. Once this is accomplished, it is possible to begin phase II.

Phase II: Articulating Values and Claiming Purpose (what is our purpose based upon our values?)

1. In this phase values are described in detail and are presented publicly as value statements to the stakeholders in the community for discussion, debate, and consensus.
   - Example of a Value Statement for Respect: The Community Sport Association will foster an environment in which each individual will be encouraged to treat coaches, referees, parents and players with respect.
2. The statements need to be operationalized and institutionalized by developing “action” (behaviour) statements for all stakeholders in the Association.
   - Example of an Action/Behaviour Statement for Respect: Referees will be educated, trained, and given the jurisdiction to assign penalties/fouls for behaviours that are deemed to be disrespectful to players, coaches, referees, and parents.
3. This phase concludes with evidence of the values actually being incorporated into the regular decision-making process. In some cases the value set may act as a screen through which all decisions must pass if they are to be approved and acted upon.
   - The set of terminal values and the accompanying action/behaviour statements are formally written in the by-laws of the Association. The Association now becomes accountable to the public to provide a learning environment in sport through which terminal values, such as, respect, are developed and enforced.

Phase III: Values and Ethics Strategy (how should we behave?)

1. In the final phase, the association develops an ethics curriculum for coaches, volunteers, officials, parents, and players that describe the values of the community sport association and how they are to be incorporated in all activities from planning to playing.
2. This ethics curriculum will include the value statements and how they can be employed in the various activities of community sport.
3. Ethical decision-making models can also be developed with the values of the Association as foundational elements to consider in the decision-making process.
4. While sanctions may be difficult for a variety of reasons, the Association can make a concerted effort to publicly reward behaviour that demonstrates the values statement in action. The public relations around these awards must be sure that members of the community hold them in high regard suited to the stature and esteem of the accomplishment of core values. Without careful planning around the presentation/marketing of these awards, there is danger of them becoming platitudinous.
5. As part of the educational development of players it must be made clear that the goals for the involvement in community sport are ultimately the terminal values identified in Phase I. Therefore, the focus of concern cannot end at how a particular athlete played in a game or in a season, but a constant inquiry of what the athlete got out of his or her involvement in the sport.

Figure 3. Values and ethics strategy for community sport
References


Appendix A

Ethics.

The focus of ethics is on what we ought to do in a particular situation as well as how we ought to live our life in general. The answers to these questions are far from simple and demand considerable reflection. This reflection, however, is not the exclusive domain of philosophers. Rather, it is the responsibility of each and everyone to consider the ethical duty and consequences of their behaviour and ultimately how they ought to live their lives. These responsibilities form the groundwork for the assessment of any action in sport and elsewhere. In this section, three approaches to ethical behaviour will be briefly discussed (see Figure 1 in Section I).

Ethical Duty. This dimension looks toward what a person perceives as his or her duty to act in a particular manner. This duty can be expressed in terms of one’s multiple commitments to a team, to one’s family and friends, to society, to humanity, to the ecology, to one’s faith, etc. Most often duty is translated into codes of conduct or principles that we follow as a function of being members of a particular group or groups. Joining a team or any organisation of people, in good faith, assumes that the individual intends (i.e., accepts the responsibility) to follow the rules. The key to this approach is reflecting upon what one perceives as one’s duty and then committing to abide by it. As part of the personal reflection of duty, the individual must consider to what extent other duties, as a result of multiple memberships, may come into conflict. For example, if an individual has a duty to be honest as a function of his or her commitment to the Bible, and then is asked to commit a “good” foul in a basketball game or to pad a budget, how is this to be reconciled? More often than not, we don’t perceive this to be a conflict because our behaviour is rarely examined in terms of our ethical duties but rather in terms of outcomes or consequences.

Ethical Consequences. This dimension is less concerned with the means of action (i.e., duty) than it is with the ends or outcomes of behaviour. From this perspective we judge an act as being good if it accomplishes the desired aim (the ends justify the means). Usually we judge the goodness of this outcome by how many people it benefits – the greatest good for the greatest number is the general rule for this ethical approach. The problem of course arises when the means to this desired end comes into conflict with our sense of duty. For example, during the 1972 Canada Cup series with the Soviet Union, the end Canada sought was to win the series and demonstrate Canada’s hockey supremacy. While we did manage to win this series and bolster our Canadian patriotism (the end was achieved), we still cringe collectively when we think of Bobby Clarke slashing and breaking the ankle (thereby becoming a means to his ends) of his Russian opponent Valerie Kharlamov.

While these two approaches represent opposite ends of the continuum (i.e., means versus ends), they need not be considered as mutually exclusive when ethical decision making is required. We can do our duty and
strive to accomplish goals. The key is being able to define and defend our sense of duty and the terminal values of sport.

*Ethical Freedom and Responsibility.* This third perspective focuses less on the externally imposed duty or on the perceived outcome of behaviour but rather upon the extent to which an individual acknowledges his or her freedom to choose a course of action and the responsibility he or she must take for all of their decisions. The primary goal of this ethical perspective is being responsible and developing as an individual as opposed to allowing responsibility to dissipate through the crowd or the herd mentality.

**VALUES.**

Ethics assists us in determining what we ought to do. Values, on the other hand, provide us with the background to understand *why we do what we do.* While many definitions of values exist, one of the most concise and powerful is the following: “A value is a concept of the desirable with a motivating force” (Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 36). This definition implies that behaviour is a direct result of what we value because a value has a “motivating force”. This obviously appeals to those values that we actually hold as opposed to ones that we say we hold or would like to hold but then fail to act upon them. Values that we actually hold are often termed core values – as opposed to intended, adopted, and weak values. Core values are the values that lead to action regardless of the circumstance. Intended values are those that we intend to hold, yet these may be influenced by external variables. For example, I may intend to walk to work everyday, however, when it is -36 C, I will drive my car.

Adopted values are those that the individual adopts as a function of the pressure to conform to a societal or organizational norm. They are adopted yet not necessarily internalized (i.e., they are not core values). I may say I hold a particular value and I may even act on this value, however, outside the group or organisation, I will not base my behaviour on this particular value. Finally weak values are those that I say I value, yet these values never translate into action. For example, a sport administrator may suggest that he or she values grass root sport programming; yet when budgets are developed, he or she directs the majority of funding to elite programmes. Therefore, that which is truly valued – the one having a motivating force – is the elite and not the developmental programme. In this example, elite sport could be a core, intended, or adopted value, while developmental sport is a weak value.

One last important item for consideration is the extent to which a value is instrumental to another value or if the value is terminal or an end in itself. If, for example, I value fitness as an instrumental value, it must therefore lead to a terminal value or to another instrumental value, such as a long and healthy life. A second example would be parents valuing teamwork in sport (instrumental) because it leads to the development of social interaction skills necessary for their child to be successful in her or his future career (instrumental) which in turn leads to a happier life generally (terminal).
Ethics and values are tied together intimately. If what I ought to do is a core value, then presumably I will do it. If it is an intended or adopted value then I may do it. If I know what I ought to do, and this duty is a weak value, I probably won’t do it. For example, if I know that ethically I should not play an injured athlete, yet I hold this as a weak value and if I perceive winning as a core, intended, or adopted value and the ethical treatment of athletes as a weak value, then I will play injured athletes.

**Purpose**

Purpose refers to what the organization intends to do. Purpose clarifies organizational behaviour individually and collectively and is based upon what the organization values, instrumentally and terminally. The purpose of a school is to teach because education is valued; the purpose of business is to make a profit because economic wealth is valued and so on. Understanding the value behind the purpose is fundamental if one wants to set any strategic direction. Without this information, an organization is adrift and will move in the direction of each and every wave. A passage from Carroll’s (1974) *Alice in Wonderland* speaks clearly to this item:

‘Cheshire Cat,’ she began, rather shyly. ‘Would you tell me please, which way I should go from here?’ ‘That depends on where you want to get to,’ said the Cat. ‘I don’t care very much where,’ said Alice. ‘Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,’ said the Cat. ‘As long as I get somewhere,’ Alice explained. ‘Oh you are sure to do that,’ said the Cat, ‘as long as you walk long enough.’ (p. 30)

If we lack clarity on the values and purpose(s) of community sport, then we have little hope of setting its direction for the future. In other words, sport as a medium for moral development will only happen by chance when those rare individuals who see sport as more than winning become involved. If we wish to take control of our own fate and explicitly set a direction, we need to firmly establish the values and purposes of community sport (see Figure 2 in section I).

What then is the purpose of community sport? Upon what core value is it based? Is it instrumental or terminal? If there is more than one core value and more than one purpose, how are we to reconcile their priority? These questions need to be addressed in order to determine what external strategies will suit community sport and which ones cannot be imported.
Any examination of spectator sport, the way it is relayed through the print and electronic media, and the effect of the resulting message in terms of values and ethics has to begin with a question: why do we care in the first place? What is it about watching others compete that is so compelling as to have become the underpinning of an industry that rivals Hollywood?

The king’s ransoms paid to our most famous professional athletes are a direct reflection of our passion for the games they play, and more specifically of the viewers and readers those games can deliver to advertisers. The sports audience is a committed audience. It engages not just for an hour or two, but through seasons that can last for months, and year after year after year. Without that connection, without that engagement, the entire pyramid comes tumbling down.

In its original, organic form, the link between the audience and the athlete was a simple matter of community affirmation – and by extension, self-affirmation. Those athletes who you watched in competition were family or friends or neighbours, or at the furthest remove, strangers who came from the place you called home. Gathering to support them was a shared, collective purpose, like church or temple, like grassroots politics, the act of being part of a larger whole, and among those who share a common set of beliefs or interests. To celebrate one of our own in competition with athletes from a place near or far away was to celebrate core values. If your town’s team beat the team from down the road, it was an opportunity for self-celebration, for asserting your place in the universe.

Growing up in Hamilton, Ontario, at least in the city as it existed 40 years ago, one understood what made it distinctive. There was a single, dominant industry – steel – the fortunes of which determined the fortunes of nearly everyone’s lives. It was a town with pockets of wealth and of poverty, but the predominant self-image was of a working class community, a lunch-bucket town, a hard-hat town, the kind of place where people were not born into privilege, where they worked hard for their money, where they came home tired at the end of the day. Honest toil, honest labour, and little pretense. Anyone who identified themselves as a Hamiltonian would have had those values as part of their identifying myth – just as someone who grew up in Regina, or Calgary, or Sudbury, or St. John’s, would have come to believe something about their nature as it related to their community.

Perhaps in some places that might have been reflected in a local pride in distinctive art, or music, or architecture. Sports,
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though, was for many a more natural outlet, a place where local hopes and aspirations could be expressed on the field or on the ice. Edmonton, tired of playing second fiddle to Calgary, cast itself as the City of Champions, celebrating the exploits of Wayne Gretzky’s Oilers, and Warren Moon’s Eskimos. The entire province of Saskatchewan lived out its dreams through the football Roughriders. Even the largest cities weren’t immune: Chicago, with the lovably sad-sack Cubs, Toronto (and for decades half the country along with it) focusing its aspirations through the hockey Maple Leafs, New York equally divided between the high-and-mighty Yankees and the upstart Mets. In Hamilton, it was of course the football Tiger-Cats, the rough, tough team whose very style of play seemed to mirror the city’s self-image, especially when matched against the hated Toronto Argonauts, the embodiment of big city elitism (at least from one perspective).

When your team won, you won. When your city triumphed, it was an affirmation of its values, of its character. To root, root, root for the home team was in fact a way of root, rooting for yourself, a way of asserting your existence and importance.

At the community level, the connection with the athletes could be very direct and very real. They might well be people you knew intimately. In earlier times, even the elite professionals might well be peers. It was quite possible that you had crossed paths with someone who played in the National Hockey League or the Canadian Football League. They could live down the street, since their income wasn’t so different from that of a comfortable middle-class household. And at very least, they would have grown up in similar circumstances to your own, not separated from their community as teenagers because of their athletic talents.

Meanwhile, the even bigger, American-based leagues remained distant, exotic, and foreign. Major League Baseball came into homes via television one afternoon a week during the regular season. The National Football League the same. The connection remained unchallenged, then, between a community, its own athletes, and its representative teams and individual athletes, whether major league or minor league, professional or amateur, without the sense of big league envy that has become so prevalent. And because of that, because it was possible to connect real life with athletic heroism, it was also possible to realistically ascribe a set of values to athletic success, especially the belief that through hard work and perseverance, one could achieve as one’s heroes had.

The bond between fans and athletes remains potent, even though those circumstances have changed dramatically. Clearly, the need remains great for that
sense of shared purpose, of community, of commitment, that comes with gathering together (either in person, or through the media) to care about the same thing at the same time as hundreds or thousands of others. There are precious few opportunities for that kind of mass passion and common language in the modern world. The decline of organized religion as a community focus and the prevailing cynicism about politics has chipped away at what were the dominant mass belief systems. Spectator sport, as some would argue, may be an empty spectacle, an opiate, but it is an empty spectacle with an appeal that extends far beyond the pure entertainment value of the two or three hour contest.

But though that bond remains intact, the relationship between the athletes themselves and the fans has been perverted. There is a marked disconnect between sports as it is experienced through television, talk radio, and the sports pages, and the recreational pursuits of those who do not possess world class, big league skills. They are no longer “us”. They no longer seem to be even the same species as us. They live in a rarefied world of wealth and privilege and superhero gifts, plying their trade here, there and everywhere, not real, not of this world.

Of course the irony is that they became less like us purely because we cared so much, because our passion, when funneled into what would become a sophisticated entertainment industry, was transformed into billions of billions of dollars – the bulk of it falling into the hands of a very few superstars, and the team owners who provided them with employment. The distortion of values begins with distorted needs, with the fact that at no time in human history have spectator sports filled such an enormous void. We need them very, very much, and so we have made them rich.

Contrast the world of four decades ago to the one our children are growing up in now, one in which all games from all leagues are available, no matter where and when they take place. True hometown loyalties have become nearly irrelevant. Elite athletes are identified before their teen years, and learn their trade in a rarefied environment that very soon becomes entirely separate from recreational sport. The stars, like the stars of television or film, are unreal, distant, nearly abstract.

And though we still tend to ascribe to athletes the values that have always gone with the pursuit of excellence, the underlying message beneath the homilies is a very different one. The notions of winning at all costs, playing to the edge of the rules and beyond, sacrificing everything for the sake of victory while disdaining any place lower than first – and publicly humiliating those beaten along the way – have become the accepted norm. Just rhyme off the t-shirt slogans, the book titles, the advertising jingles: In your face; I only talk winning; Second place is for losers; Give me the damn ball.
That original relationship between athletes and spectators has been broken, and the connections have been severed. There is little qualitative difference between watching Vin Diesel or Denzel Washington in a movie and watching Vince Carter or Mario Lemieux in the field of play. Neither seems of the mortal world. Neither seems real. And neither embodies values beyond the commercial: a great professional athlete is necessarily a rich athlete, whose contract negotiations, salary demands and lavish lifestyle will be nearly as much a part of their story as what they accomplish in competition. For some, who move almost entirely beyond sport into the realm of pure celebrity (Dennis Rodman, for instance), the athletic side of their lives can become nearly irrelevant. Anna Kournikova, who has never won a significant tournament, is as familiar to casual observers of tennis as are the Williams sisters, Venus and Serena, the greatest players of their generation, eventually to be recognized as among the greatest of all time. What’s sport got to do with it?

Greed – not just among athletes, but among those who actually control professional sport in the boardroom of television networks, shoe companies, and professional franchises – goes with the territory. To be a professional athlete in the 21st Century is to be, by necessity, a mercenary. (Though that attitude is in itself a reaction against the exploitative practices of the past, it’s hard to imagine that many of today’s professional athletes fully understand that history, or the price paid by their predecessors.) And just as Hollywood stars are forgiven the kind of occasional behavioural lapses that might destroy careers and lives in the real world, professional athletes seem to operate under a different set of societal rules. A general sense of being above and beyond the law goes with the territory of stardom.

It’s quite a life. And if performance-enhancing drugs, for instance, might make it more possible to move into that elite sphere, just how would the risk/benefit analysis work for someone who believes, accurately or as the result of self-delusion, that they’re on the brink? If there really is that much money at the end of the rainbow, what role would education play in the life of a young, promising athlete? If cheaters seem to more than occasionally prosper, from fixed Olympic figure skating competitions on down, just how great is the temptation to stray beyond the bounds of fair play?

How do those attitudes filter down into our communities, especially to young people? They produce consumers of sports entertainment, including sports-related video games, who can have little or no connection to participatory sport. They create a gap between those few young athletes who are identified as having elite potential and the great majority, who lack those skills or body types, but who might still enjoy a lifetime of fitness and recreation through sport. While the “rep” athlete is encouraged to devote more and more time to games and practices, turning seasonal sports into 12 month vocations, so many “house league” athletes fall by the wayside long before they reach their teenage years, made to understand that hard work and perseverance are only part of the equation.
The attitudes of the professional world creep inevitably into youth sport, where coaches and administrators are torn between creating recreational opportunities for the broadest base possible, and developing the elite athletes of tomorrow – however statistically unlikely that might be. The coach screaming at kids from courtside has seen the act on television, has deluded himself or herself into thinking that’s the approach that works, has decided that winning matters, that the best kid on the team is more important than the worst. Officials being challenged by young athletes and their coaches are the unfortunate victims of behaviour lifted straight from the “role models” of the big leagues. Athletes who bend the rules trying to gain an advantage are only going along with what’s celebrated every Saturday night in Canada during the hockey season. Hockey players who fight, or basketball players who try to show up their opponents, or football players who look not just to throw a tackle, but to intimidate, are simply emulating their heroes, following the established path to success.

In professional sports, there is a direct relationship between performance and return – that is, economic return, return in the form of fame, in the form of privileges. And underlying that system is the message that success can be achieved by any means necessary, that risks (the risks of cheating, the risks of using performance-enhancing drugs, the risks of challenging an official or a coach) are mitigated by the rewards. The danger – of getting penalized, of getting caught, of getting disciplined – is a small price to pay. (To be fair, that same celebration of creative rule bending for gain, of questionable ethics leading to enormous wealth, can be found every day of the week in business pages of your daily newspaper.)

It must be acknowledged that there is also a counter-message out there, an alternate story that tends to be told most convincingly during the country’s biannual infatuation with the Olympic Games. Though the Olympics have produced some of the biggest athletic scandals of the modern age (Ben Johnson, the crooked figure skating competition in Salt Lake City), and the Games themselves have known the taint of corruption, they are still the one place where the good try is celebrated, where athletes who exist outside of the great sports/entertainment complex are briefly in the spotlight, and where you might well see someone who lives around the corner (like my neighbour, the former Olympic runner Paula Schnurr). All of the organic connections between community and sport and achievement can still be embodied in a Simon Whitfield or Clara Hughes or Daniel Igali.

That those stories tend to disappear in the months outside of the Olympic Games is
the fault, some would argue, of the mainstream media, which tend to pay little more than lip service to sports outside of the major professional leagues. (That said, most newspapers in this country print daily special sections during the Games. The broadcasters provide hours upon hours of blanket coverage. To exclude Olympic coverage from a discussion of the place of amateur sports in the media would be like excluding the Super Bowl when discussing coverage of the National Football League.)

But in this case, as in most cases, the press reflects, rather than drives cultural trends. Expecting advocacy in the sports pages, or on network television, betrays a basic naïveté, and a misunderstanding of the business. With limited space, limited air time, limited resources, it should come as no surprise that the bulk of coverage is devoted to those sports entertainment products which interest the largest number of people, creating the largest audience and thereby creating the largest revenue. That’s a commercial reality that has been in place for the better part of a century. (Sports did not become a business in the latter part of the 20th Century, as some romantics maintain. It has been a business since the late 19th Century, though the owners in the past did their best to shield the paying public and the exploited athletes from that reality, so as not to impede on ticket buying fantasies or jack up salaries.) It will not fundamentally change.

Though it might not seem like it, the fact is that athletes outside the professional team sports (and more community-driven events, like this year’s Canada Winter Games, which received extensive coverage on TSN) receive far more attention in this country than they do in the United States. And through the devotion of individual reporters and sports editors, the heroes of amateur sport (both true amateurs, and those in the quasi-professional Olympic sports) do find their way into the sports pages on a regular basis.

There will always be an appetite in the press for inspirational stories, and for stories about Canadians who have achieved at an international level, even if their sports aren’t part of the popular mix. Those will never, however, displace coverage of the minutiae of the Leafs, Habs, Senators, Flames, Oilers and Canucks. Arguing that the media have an obligation beyond that to change attitudes and provide balance, however appealing, will inevitably fall on deaf ears.

That said, fundamental change is in the wind, not because of creeping enlightenment, but because of shifts in the sports culture and in the culture at large. The evidence is all around us.

After decades with no apparent limits to growth, the professional sports industry is showing signs that it is past peak, and rapidly heading into decline. In the National Hockey League, two franchises fell into bankruptcy this past season, and there is talk of a prolonged labour dispute in 2004 that may end with the folding of several teams – the first real setback since the league began its great expansion in the late 1960’s. Major League Baseball, which narrowly averted another labour war in 2003, still seems to be a financial house of cards. In Europe, soccer
teams in the United Kingdom and Italy are insolvent, as television revenues are no longer sufficient to cover expenses. And in every North American league, empty seats are more in evidence than ever before, the surest sign of all of market saturation, of growing fan indifference, of a creeping cynicism that has undercut the bond between consumers and the teams they support.

In every North American league, empty seats are more in evidence than ever before, the surest sign of all of growing fan indifference

The massive expansion of sports entertainment has gradually created a different kind of fan. If professional athletes indeed seem more like movie stars than anything else, a new generation has begun to approach sporting events the same way they approach a night at the local megaplex: as a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. Without firm loyalties, without the belief that used to underlie the system, a game is just a game is just a game, to be judged purely for its entertainment value. And since professional sport can’t control the quality of its product every night (in fact, through the endless dilution of the talent pool brought on by expansion, most leagues have made it worse) the turn off potential is obvious. The question changes from “Why do we care?” to “What if we didn’t care quite so much?” The latter presents a frightening prospect for bloated businesses based on the flawed theory of perpetual growth. Now, professional sport is faced with the prospect of shrinking in a hurry, inevitably a bumpy road. No one is quite sure what lies at the end, though it figures to be a world in which the gap between professional athletes and the rest of the world has been at least somewhat narrowed.

Still, there remains that great need for a communal experience. And it may not just be wishful thinking to believe that the public may turn towards something smaller, more modest, more community-based. The big sports certainly aren’t going to disappear. But as they struggle to adapt to changing circumstances, there is the real possibility for the first time in a long time that fans might be willing to look at something different.

Consider this short case study. In the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, the Canadian Football League peaked in terms of attendance and television revenues, following a sudden, dramatic growth spurt that, as it turned out, couldn’t be sustained. Faced with greater competition from American-based leagues, both through the expansion of television options and through Major League Baseball’s move into the Toronto market, the CFL found itself paying player salaries that couldn’t be supported by revenues. As fan interest plummeted, most notably in the major Canadian cities, franchises were left in desperate straits. Two teams with deep historical roots, the Montreal Alouettes and Ottawa Rough Riders, were forced out of business. Others seemed set to follow, with the entire league on the verge of collapse entering the 1990’s. A desperate attempt to survive through expansion to the United
States proved disastrous. A game that had been invented in Canada, that was as indigenous to the country as hockey, was on the verge of extinction, beyond the help of even the savviest marketer.

Then, in the early days of the new century, there was a subtle shift in public taste. Bigger wasn’t necessarily better. Overly “packaged” sporting events had become to seem old hat. An increasingly jaded marketplace was beyond being amazed by innovation. Smaller and humbler weren’t necessarily the same as inferior. There is probably a sound demographic explanation for the trend, tied to the aging boomer generation, and there is certainly an economic explanation, tied to the outrageous ticket prices now charged by “major league” sports. For those reasons, and for others more difficult to pin down, the Canadian audience chose to return to a familiar game and view it with a different set of eyes. Not to the extent of a fad or a trend – the continuing struggle to sell seats in Toronto and Vancouver proved that. But much increased television ratings (especially among younger audiences), and the remarkable revival of the Alouettes in Montreal suggested that there was suddenly a niche for sports entertainment more directly linked to the community, employing (because of the CFL’s quota system) a large portion of homegrown athletes, few of whom earned more than middle class wages.

Having more than 66,000 people pack the Olympic Stadium to watch a Grey Cup game – as happened in 2002 – was as unimaginable ten years ago as a full house at SkyDome for a local track meet. There’s hard evidence in that of a shift in taste, a shift in values, a shift in perception and attitude.

The clear ongoing decline of the professional major leagues, the rising fortunes of the more modest, community-linked CFL, suggest a growing niche both for smaller, “boutique” professional events that fall just below the elite level, for Canadian college sports, and for other endeavours that had fallen out of favour or been ignored.

Which is not to say that the clock has been turned back, that a return to simpler times is at hand, or to naively believe that in a market-driven society, those with the power and resources will suddenly see the light. But there are larger cycles in play, and there are natural limits. For those who have long hoped that sport can return to a more holistic role in the community, that there might be more of a balance between the professional world of millionaire athletes and our real lives and real values, an opportunity is at hand.
We are a media nation. At virtually any hour of the day or night, Canadians can access up-to-the-minute sports scores, commentaries and actual games. While some of the smaller newspapers and television stations cover community sport, the vast majority of stories in mainstream media focus on professional games, highly paid athletes and related scandals or intrigue.

Professional sport pervades our culture. For young people, the effects of this are widespread. The world of pro sports offers everything from a possible source for fashion, to a place to look for career inspiration, role models and even heroes.

Given the tremendous potential the media have to influence us, the purpose of this paper is to explore how the portrayal of both professional and amateur sport has an impact on how Canadians—particularly young Canadians—see themselves and define their goals and values.

Through a content analysis of four randomly selected weeks of sports coverage over the last year, this paper will outline what the current news is about, what kinds of stories are being covered, what the recurrent themes are and what underlying values—are present. It will identify what the approximate ratio of professional versus amateur coverage is in a national newspaper (The Globe and Mail), a French language provincial newspaper (La Presse), a large metropolitan daily (The London Free Press), a community weekly (Journal Argus) and several television newscasts. It will offer some idea of what the range of diversity is in both professional and amateur coverage and will answer questions like how many girls and women do we see? How many non-white athletes? Are there athletes with disabilities in the news? And given that Canada is a vast and diverse country, do we see most of our regions represented?

**Methodology**

The content analysis focuses on the print medium—newspapers. While we did watch in excess of 12 hours of television news and sports broadcasts and did monitor both public and private radio during the month of February 2003, because of accessibility issues with respect to broadcasts over the last year, this discussion is more general. In order to have information about all seasons of print sports coverage, we divided the past year into summer, winter, fall and spring, and then used random numbers to select a representative week for each time period.
The dates were May 13-19, 2002; August 5-11, 2002; September 30-October 6, 2002 and February 3-9, 2003. While 2002 was an Olympic year (Winter Games 2002 at Salt Lake City), the analysis covers winter 2003 instead so that this sample is representative of what Canadians see and read in their newspapers on a regular basis.

**Summary of Content Analysis**

For the purposes of the analysis, the researchers applied the term ‘professional’ to any athlete or team whose primary income is derived from sport. They used the terms ‘amateur,’ ‘local’ and ‘community-based sports’ interchangeably and applied them to any athlete or team who participated in sports but for whom competing was not their livelihood. The only exceptions were figure skaters who, despite competing for substantial prize money, are deemed amateurs by Sport Canada.

The vast majority of coverage in *The Globe and Mail*, a national newspaper, *La Presse*, Quebec’s provincial equivalent, and both Rogers Sportsnet and CTV Sports focuses almost exclusively on professional sports. This is not surprising given the breadth of their audience and the practical problems of trying to discuss local sports in regions too numerous to mention. This is not to suggest that there was no mention of amateur sport, but it was much less significant than professional coverage.

For the metropolitan daily, *The London Free Press*, the focus is shared with local sports at a ratio of about 70 professional to 30 amateur. Similarly, the New PL (a London-based City-TV affiliate) covers pro and local sports news. For the weekly community paper, the *Journal Argus* (in St. Marys, Ontario) the focus is almost exclusively on local sports. The only time professional athletes are mentioned in the weekly paper is if the story subjects were originally from the town or the surrounding area. In effect, these are profiles that concentrate on family history, previous local sports involvement and so forth. Examples of such stories are relatively rare in this content analysis.

**What kinds of stories are being written?**

With respect to types of stories for both professional and amateur across the media, most are ‘hard news’ (factually-based stories that tell what happened and when) or features that are closely tied to recent games or happenings in the world of sport. This is because sports coverage does not operate on different criteria from the rest of news: what gets covered are the newest, most up-to-date events. But because the news is largely about what just occurred, there is not a lot of background given in these types of stories, nor is there much room for discussion of peripheral issues or implications. This type of story coverage gives the impression that scores, standings and outcomes matter most.

**What are the recurrent themes?**

In terms of the content for the professional coverage, the most popular theme is winning and losing and the winners almost always get the most space—more photographs, more film footage, more copy
devoted to their success. The next most popular themes are money, ownership, coaching and some mention of the types of skills that helped the team win the game.

It also needs to be mentioned that statistics, in the case of newspapers, and the scoreboards in the case of television, take up significant amounts of space. This reporting of scores in a stand-alone fashion along with the fact that winning is by far the most prevalent feature of news coverage in general, significantly divorces the outcome from the process and may suggest to young Canadian readers that scoring and winning are more important than how you play the game.

In terms of community-based sports, the most popular theme is identical to that found in professional coverage: winning and losing. Next, in contrast to the depiction of professional outcomes, is a description of skills or positions the athletes play and strategies that aided them to win their game. In fact, for the weekly *Journal Argus*, game descriptions sometimes outnumber winning as the primary theme. The effect is that while winning is obviously important, being skillful, playing your position and supporting your team are also part of the community news agenda. Can this local coverage offset for young readers the emphasis on scores and winning that the larger papers usually offer?

Do different papers frame sports stories in unique ways? Does this give Canadians a different impression of what’s valued in sports?

In the *Journal Argus*, there is a marked difference in how winning or losing is conveyed. Whereas *The London Free Press* tends to frame both its professional and local stories in the same manner, usually mentioning the score in the first few paragraphs and then outlining what events led to the outcome, the smaller local paper usually tells the story in chronological order with the outcome of the game near the end. The effect of reading about the games in this manner is that winning is not as emphasized and the process is more evident than when scores are reported first.

**What about opinion pieces?**

With respect to types of news coverage, after hard news and features, the most prevalent form is the column. Columns are usually written by a seasoned sports writer who, because he\(^\text{10}\) knows the field so well, has a large degree of latitude in terms of subject matter. Columns are not necessarily tied to the most recent events or games, but they tend to be related to current

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\(^{10}\) The term ‘he’ is used here because out of the 295 columns analysed, only one was written by a woman and it was a roundup of soccer events, not a commentary *per se.*
affairs in the same way as other types of news.

The vast majority of columns in *The Globe*, *The Free Press* and *La Presse* are about professional athletes and professional games. For *The Globe* and *La Presse*, the ratio of pro to amateur is about 30:1. For the *Free Press*, it is about 25:1. Given that this paper sells itself in part based on its local sports coverage, it is surprising that its columnists don’t devote more space to commentary on local athletes or teams. However, columns tend to be critical and while the sports editor, Dave Langford, says that *The Free Press* doesn’t shy away from negativity in amateur coverage, columnists may subconsciously feel less comfortable commenting on young athletes who are not professionals.

On the other hand, the purpose of columns, like news in general, is not to act as a community cheerleader, so the result may be that it’s easier to comment on professional rather than local sports. Another point to consider is that a large number of columns in *The Free Press* are imported from the paper’s head office, Sunmedia/Quebecor. Similarly, *La Presse* relies heavily on AP and other wire services, so these common stories must be relevant to all newspapers in the chain or member group.

**DO OPINION PIECES HAVE DIFFERENT THEMES THAN NEWS STORIES?**

In terms of prevalent themes, the columns, like the hard news stories and features, focus predominantly on who’s winning and on issues related to money, ownership and athletes’ skills. While columns were surveyed for the prevalence of sportsmanship as a theme, most mention only those plays that resulted in scoring or injuries—plays that directly affected the outcome of the game as opposed to those having to do with fairness, honesty, consideration for other athletes and so forth. This lack of discussion on sportsmanship was equivalent in columns about professional and amateur sports. Does this silence around good sportsmanship leave Canadian amateurs with the impression that these kinds of values are unimportant?

The opportunity does exist for these commentary writers to open a larger discussion around issues relating to fair play, the value of competition and the merits of integration of sport and community. At present, this discussion rarely occurs.

**Diversity in Media Coverage**

For a variety of reasons, media coverage is not as diverse as one might reasonably expect. Sports pages and sports broadcasts are still sexist, class-oriented, largely white and dominated by able-bodied people.

Since the vast majority of media coverage focuses on the world of professional sport, and because pro sports are an almost all-male arena, hard news, features, profiles and columns focus exclusively on women 7.5% of the time. Similarly, women do not appear in as many photographs depicting professional athletes. Photos of exclusively women make up 7.2% and photos including
both sexes make up 1.6%. When women do appear in pro photos, they are almost as likely to appear only in a tightly framed ‘headshot’ as they are an action shot. While the numbers of longer hard news stories were not tabulated separately from the short summaries or ‘Briefs,’ the impression is that photographs of professional women often appear in the ‘Briefs’ section where there are a few words about a player’s latest win and a close-up of her face rather than in a longer hard news piece or a feature. The fact that women tend to appear in head shots rather than action-based photos and their likelihood of appearing more in the ‘Briefs’ could give Canadian women and girls the impression that they are more to be ‘looked at’ than admired for their athletic abilities, and their accomplishments are less worthy because coverage does not approach equality.

People of colour fare slightly better in professional photo coverage than in amateur. Of the 1511 photos total, 141 are non-whites. Of the photos of non-whites, pros make up 93.6% and amateurs 6.4%. But professional athletes of colour represent only 11.2 % of the overall total of pro photos. Because a large number of African American and Latin American men play football, basketball and baseball, this figure is undoubtedly low. What is, however, even less acceptable is the extremely low number of people of colour in amateur photographs. For example, in the city of London (population 300,000), there is a First Nations population of about 10,000 people and this is only one segment of the non-white population. But of the 329 shots of amateur players, only 9 or 2.9% are of non-whites. When young athletes of colour do not see their faces regularly in the sports pages, do they wonder if they really belong on the sports fields?

Because The London Free Press and the Journal Argus cover local sports, and because women and girls are participating in sport in ever-increasing numbers, there is a greater opportunity for more equal representation in the amateur coverage. However, despite the greater numbers available, in terms of total number of stories (hard news, features, columns and profiles) devoted solely to women’s or girls’ athletic endeavours, the ratio is 3 men to 1 woman. 16.6% of the stories cover both sexes.

Photographs don’t suggest much gender equality either. Women and girls are the sole focus of pictures 23.7% of the time. Again, females are as likely to be shown in a casual pose or a headshot as they are actually playing a game.

Arguably part of the media’s mandate is to represent its communities to themselves and to each other. While La Presse is very good at playing up Quebec athletes and noting their successes at home and abroad, in general, The Globe and The Free Press don’t often note a player’s hometown or province unless the piece is a profile of that player and the reason for coverage is because the angle is ‘once-local athlete does well.’ The references that were recorded included a fairly diverse cross-section of east/west representation, but only one was from the
Far North\textsuperscript{11} and none named a First Nations Reserve. The impression our young Canadians might get is that urban Canada matters most and that sports aren’t played in any organized fashion in the North or on reserves.

Athletes with disabilities are similarly invisible in news coverage. In the television broadcasts, only footage of able-bodied athletes was shown. Of the 2461 stories (professional and amateur, hard news, features, profiles and columns) in The Globe, The Free Press, La Presse and the Journal Argus, 13 or .5\% make reference to athletes with a disability. And in several of these instances, the disability was a throat problem that curling skip Bryan Cochrane has and the story was about how he uses a whistle to signal his team on the rink. In terms of photographs, there were 2 in total (both in The London Free Press). The overall impression is that coverage of athletes with a disability only occurs when there is a major tournament like the Paralympics or if they do play in ‘mainstream’ competition, they are noteworthy because, like Cochrane, they play in a unique way. Otherwise, these athletes don’t appear in the news.

\textbf{The Larger Implications}

\textit{19\textsuperscript{th} Century amateur recreation and participation has been transformed into late 20\textsuperscript{th} Century spectator-centered technology and business.}

Lawrence Wenner, \textit{Mediasport}\textsuperscript{12}

We don’t need a content analysis to tell us that the coverage of sport in today’s media is almost exclusively about ‘major league’ sports: highly skilled athletes compete against each other to win big pay cheques and entertain audiences. No one with a critical eye is really fooled. This is not sport for the beauty or exhilaration of participation; it’s not about good sportsmanship, fair play, honesty, respect or self-discipline. It’s not about the values most parents and coaches want children to learn. Coverage of professional sport is big business and it’s become an integral part of the entertainment industry. The question is, given that most young people are not educated about the underlying messages of pro sports, do they import expectations, behaviours and problematic values from the media coverage to the local playing fields?

The purpose of media coverage of professional sports is to deliver audiences to advertisers. That sports broadcasts and sports pages are of paramount importance to their media outlets is supported by the fact that significant amounts of time and resources are devoted to their provision. A recent survey conducted by The London Free Press suggests that the sports section is the

\textsuperscript{11} This was a tragic story about Brandon police facing disciplinary action because they did not follow procedure in releasing a drunk driver into the custody of a sober adult. The charged youth, Terrence Tootoo, brother of Jordan, subsequently committed suicide. “Police face discipline in Tootoo case,” \textit{The Globe and Mail}. Saturday, October 5, 2002. S8.

second most important reason people cite for purchasing the paper. *The Free Press* also employs 8.5 people in its sports department—roughly 14% of their news/reporting/copy editing staff and equivalent to the same percent of their total budget. Similarly, Canwest/Global spends equal amounts of broadcast time on news and sports at 11pm—half an hour each.

Media organizations make their profits through selling advertising; or rather, by selling audiences to advertisers. Both advertisers and the media know their target audience for sports is men between the ages of 18 and 40. A glance through the pages of the local sports section in *The London Free Press* shows that most of the ads are for beer, racetracks, sports equipment, cars and sex-related items like strip clubs and adults-only videos. So sport is no longer a sacred experience; it’s a media product and the reality is profane.

Sport is easily used for the purpose of entertainment because the pursuit of athletic excellence is entertaining. Conflict is one of the most important elements of news coverage in general and sport employs a contest filled with challenges, risks, violence, victory and defeat. We enjoy watching the struggle and become vested in the outcome. But it is important to distinguish between sport played for its own sake and sport that is packaged for sale. Professional sport places an inordinate amount of emphasis on winning. It’s clear that being a winner means money, popularity and in some cases, ascension to heroic stature.

When Steve Yzerman chose to play in the playoffs last year despite being injured, he was rewarded by flattering coverage that inscribed him as a superhuman who sacrificed his health in pursuit of the win. When young Canadians see the media honouring Yzerman’s behaviour, it may lead them to think that they, too, should place winning above health concerns.

Violence, too, is an intrinsic value of the entertainment world. So players like Tie Domi will be shown with numerous cuts, bruises and stitches, in an enormous close-up photograph on the front page of the sports section. This coverage is not because he is a skilled player or because he was a good sport. He’s a fighter and that’s gained him star status. This behaviour is rewarded by his coach, his team’s owners, the fans, the media coverage and the outcome of the game: if he beats up enough people, the Leafs might win.

The appeal of violence is so great that Don Cherry makes a great deal of money from the sale of his “Rock ‘em, Sock ‘em” videos that replay hockey’s goriest moments and most vicious brawls. This is the glamour of the entertainment industry but it is not related to the ethics of sport.

The overall impression from the coverage of professional sport is a ‘win at any cost’ attitude. In the 1998 American Baseball season, there was not much media condemnation of Mark McGwire’s use of performance enhancing substances or the
lack of clear doping policies in baseball. What was important was setting the home run record because that was entertaining. People will watch or read about that: and when they do, is it with the impression that these entertainment values are synonymous with the values of amateur sport?

The leads of print stories that speak of the final scores, and the television packaging of sports ‘highlights’—in hockey, highlights are goals and fights—divorce the outcome from the process. The essential factors of the plays themselves become lost because they simply are not emphasized in the way sports coverage is constructed. Often they are not even mentioned. The effect for Canadian readers and viewers is that athletes appear to exist in a state of constant goal scoring or fighting; the more ‘mundane’ aspects of the games are edited out. Do parents, coaches and even kids themselves expect their sports experiences to be like the compacted, media-created games? Do parents, coaches and kids think the majority of their game time should comprise ‘highlights’ and goals? And if so, does this media-created image affect local athletes who might prefer to enjoy the challenge of the game rather than emulate what they consider to be the behaviour of their professional elders?

Media provide a mechanism for transforming athletes into nationally celebrated figures. They win for all of us. Through media exposure, athletes are commodified and used as tools to win. They can be bought, sold and traded—these stories are covered—but when these people are injured or past their profitable productive period, they are expendable. What happens after an athlete’s career has ended rarely makes a front page, or an inside story for that matter.

But while athletes are on top of their game and winning, they are stars in the making, and the value of this potential is not lost on large corporations. A significant part of the transformation process from athlete to celebrity involves advertisers who want to sell products and these businesses know that an endorsement from a hockey or baseball star will help their sales tremendously. These athletes then appear in a variety of coverage—not just during games—and their popularity is multiplied. Their success is self-evident. But now, how they behave off the field is as interesting to media outlets as how they behave and play on the field.

The problem is, these athletes didn’t necessarily sign on to be role models for kids, coaches or parents. Still, when convicted rapist Mike Tyson fights Evander Holyfield and thousands of fans scream at ringside, the issue of whether or not his morally bereft personal life ought to be part

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of his public performance needs to be
raised. How do we separate violence in one
sphere from violence in another? Do youths
understand the distinction? Is celebrating a
professional athlete’s sports abilities
tantamount to accepting his personal
mores?

Local sports are played in a broad context
and that environment is one that’s largely
created by coverage. In general, the media
serve an agenda-setting function; that is,
they set the parameters for the discussion
and have an impact on ideas, attitudes and
behaviours. And in many cases, local sports
are framed in nearly identical ways to
professional stories. This implies to our
youths that the issues are the same. So while
we might want to separate professional
from community coverage, or say that we see
pro sport but live amateur, the distinction
is simply not that clear.

Because of the influence of entertainment
values in sport coverage, there are
numerous instances where games become
opportunities for broadcasting musical
performances, parades, soap opera style
profiles and other material unrelated to
athletic pursuits. In recent coverage of the
Olympic Games, the actual events took up
only a fraction of the overall broadcast time.
Instead, the networks focused on athletes’
calamities, family details, personal challenges
and so on. In Super Bowl 2003, the Tampa
Bay Buccaneers shared the front page with

the half-time entertainment, Shania Twain.
The commentaries written or broadcast
about Twain’s lip-syncing performance and
her revealing bustier were almost as
numerous as opinions about the game itself.
On CBC Radio One the following day, CBC
sports commentator Kevin Sylvester spent
several minutes discussing his
disappointment with her performance.

There is tremendous hyping of some types
of contests—generally football and
hockey—and this makes it clear to
audiences which contests are worthy of
coverage and respect. Some sports are
considered valid or ‘manly,’ while others
clearly are not. Recently, on a popular
London radio station, a DJ commented that
he couldn’t believe that coverage of curling
could take up most of the front page of The
London Free Press sports section. He said,
“Come on. What about real sports? Curling
is just housework on ice.” The implication
for Canadian athletes is clear: real sports are
for men; curling is for women or sissies.

In part, these types of comments emerge
from the language journalists and
commentators use to describe sports in
general: The “sharp shooters” and
“snipers” take shots with “laser-like”
precision in a contest billed as “first blood”;
they “batter,” “annihilate,” “flatten,”
“crush,” “mow down” and “trample” their
opponents. In order to win, even golfers
must “really stick to their guns.”

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14 Indebted to “Discussion Paper on the Influences
of Professional Sport in the context of the Canadian
Strategy for Ethical Conduct in Sport.” Canadian
Centre for Ethics in Sport. December 2001 (revised
April 2002). P.2.

15 DJ Paul Damen, Drive Home Show, FM 96,

16 All taken from The London Free Press. These words
are so common that they don’t merit individual
citations.
language of description is softer in the local coverage of the community weekly, the Journal Argus, virtually the same descriptors are used for professional and amateur sports in The London Free Press. On-air commentary by the New PL is similar in style to London’s local paper. When they discuss London’s Junior A team, the London Knights, they are “battling it out” or “drilling goals” into the net of their opponents. This kind of language, obviously heavy in militaristic overtones, serves to reinforce the larger values of the battle: war-like attitudes, behaviours and outcomes. This type of talk indirectly supports violence and brutality and excludes discussions about fairness, justice, skills and the beauty of participation.

Combining the war mentality with an outcome based on ultimate supremacy means that in some cases, even when athletes win, only first place really counts. This point is demonstrated in a recent headline in The Free Press about Hermann Maier, “Hermator continues to amaze. But he’s not happy with a Super-G silver at the world alpine ski championships.”

One word that is noticeably absent from all the sports coverage is ‘fun.’ While most people agree that playing sports at a local level is supposed to encourage physical fitness, well-being, self-esteem and so on, it is implied that all these goals are pursued for fun—that everyone has a good time in the process. However, the term ‘fun’ appeared only once in all the coverage surveyed, and it was used in a sarcastic, ironic manner.

The London Free Press ran a photo of Bobby Orr and a ‘teaser’ headline encouraging readers to turn to sports for more. The headline read, “Hockey Heresy: NHL Legend Bobby Orr preaches making minor hockey fun, of all things.” In a commentary in the sports section, columnist Jim Kernaghan makes it clear that the man who “made all things impossible seem possible in the NHL,” is trying something even more challenging: making kids’ hockey enjoyable. And although this is the point of the story, Kernaghan then chooses to devote a great deal of his column space to reminiscing about Orr’s past, his bad knees and his once-great skills. Despite Orr’s status as a star, and despite promoting fun being the central reason for his appearance, the news judgment implies that putting fun back in hockey isn’t enough to warrant undivided coverage.

The Glass Ceiling, the White Room and the Lack of Elevator Access

Media coverage can create communities. Journalists, commentators and news professionals decide who and what gets

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Because our country is vast, we rely on the media to create a community for us—a place where we can see ourselves reflected to each other. Because of the near monopoly that professional sport coverage has, and because Canada’s ‘national pastime,’ hockey, is largely white, most of the coverage reflects these realities. But the problem is greater than simply saying that women don’t play major league sports or that not a lot of people of African descent play hockey. The issue is that even around the games themselves, minorities are excluded or devalued and marginalized.

Women and Girls

Hockey Night in Canada recently hired a new on-air person, Martine Gaillard, to do the ‘on ice’ interviews with players. She’s young, blond and attractive; she is a stark contrast to Ron Maclean and Don Cherry. But her functional role is highly questionable. While she may know hockey, this skill is not made apparent. She isn’t employed to make a commentary, like Maclean or Cherry; she just asks the players questions and leaves it to the men to make the analysis.

This situation is symptomatic of the entire framing of major league sports. On television, the vast majority of sports desks are literally ‘manned.’ When women do appear (and they are in increasing numbers because they do increase the ratings), the charge that they are being hired for their looks is often made. One recent Toronto Sun article noted the number of sportscasters who have recently appeared in Playboy, or in suggestive poses on the covers of men’s magazines. Said veteran broadcaster Pat Marsden when asked if women get hired for their looks alone, “Put it this way. As far as women go, I haven’t seen a homely one yet.” Similarly, City-TV sportscaster Kathryn Humphreys defends her decision to pose naked with other women sportscasters on the cover of Urban Male Magazine, by saying, “That was so much about nothing. I cover men chasing balls around. For that, I don’t think I need to be taken seriously.”

The implication is obvious: men do battle on the field while women sit on the sidelines watching, cheering and being beautiful. Women commentators aren’t taken seriously and even serious commentators make fun of themselves. A female sportscaster on Canada AM recently pointed out on-air that she was wearing unmatched earrings. This was the prelude to her commentary on curling. On two recent CBC Radio One broadcasts, Ontario Morning host Erica Ritter introduced the fill-in sports commentator, Martina Fitzgerald, by commenting on her pearl necklace. In a later show, she noted Fitzgerald’s shirt. While there is nothing inherently wrong with unscripted chitchat or self-deprecating comments, the situation is unimaginable should the sportscaster have been male. That this is the norm of sports coverage suggests to Canadian girls that their role in sport is to support men and regardless of

19 Ibid, B3.
their own athletic ability or knowledge of the game, their physical appearance is what matters.

Women and girls do have the opportunity to be players in the amateur sections of sports coverage. Yet despite the fact there is phenomenal growth of women’s sport, as the content analysis shows, media coverage remains largely devoted to men and boys. In the context of The London Free Press, the territory is clearly carved out as ‘male.’ At The Free Press, advertisers may choose in which section of the paper their ads will appear. The range of ads in this section of the paper shows that in terms of audience appeal, the majority are aimed at men: there are numerous ads for beer, cars, sports equipment, hair transplants, strip clubs and race tracks. In several instances, the only photographs of women in the sports section were in ads related to sex products.

Sports language is not neutral. Women still get referred to in stereotypical ways such as when a Globe column about curlers is titled, “Diamonds are this Girl’s Best Friend.” Similarly, women are more often referred to by their first names than are their male counterparts. This difference makes women appear more like girls and demonstrates that those commenting on them are in positions of authority or superiority. Women’s appearance is still an issue. While it could be argued that when covering kids’ sports, it’s acceptable to comment on a child’s appearance, when the reference is not gender-neutral, this approach is debatable. For instance, a recent column about a children’s karate tournament called one girl champion a “cutie” and described another’s “bouncing curls.” The effect of this is that like female sports commentators, these children’s athletic achievements are overshadowed by the appeal of their appearance.

**Skin Colour, Race and Ethnicity**

Part of the implicit argument being made is that youths are influenced by what they see on television and in the sports pages. Largely, youths need some sort of identification with a player in order to feel a connection and perhaps, to believe that he or she could have a place participating in that particular sport. If you are a young person of Innu heritage, and you don’t see Innu athletes in the national media, do you feel excluded or marginalized? Does this lack of coverage have an impact on what sports you choose to play? Did the success of Jordan Tootoo and the wide-ranging media coverage of that success have a positive influence on the hopes, aspirations and behaviours of other Inuit children?

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20 [http://www.caaws.ca/Action/winter99/media_guide.htm](http://www.caaws.ca/Action/winter99/media_guide.htm)


From the perspective of colour, there are a number of athletes of African and Spanish descent in football, basketball and baseball. Because these games are regularly broadcast on mainstream television, they do have a profile in the world of professional sport. This coverage can demonstrate to Canadian kids that in the world of pro sports, colour doesn’t matter, and success—social, economic, athletic—is not dependent on being white.

Despite the fact that one of the world’s most successful golfers is a Black/Asian American (Tiger Woods), and the two most successful female tennis players are of African American descent (Serena and Venus Williams), in terms of print coverage, the representation of people of colour is still woefully inadequate. This is particularly the case if there is merit in the age-old saying ‘a picture is worth a thousand words.’ It’s difficult to quantify the number of non-whites in written texts because this aspect is not usually commented on in the story, but the photograph tally from the content analysis—which is the basis from which these comments are made—suggests that there is still a significant inequity in all the newspapers in both the professional and amateur coverage. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to offer a percentage of non-white players active in the professional leagues, the fact that The Globe and Mail, La Presse and The London Free Press run photographs of white athletes almost 90% of the time surely does not reflect the reality of the sample population.

While it is difficult to quantify news judgment—how editors decide what amount of coverage a piece deserves—there were stories that appeared in the ‘Briefs’ section of the newspapers that appeared to be significant enough to warrant larger stories and full-size photographs. For example, in The Globe and Mail, there were a few words about the fact that tennis star Serena Williams lost for only the fourth time in ten months, but this appeared in the last slot of the Briefs section. Similarly, The London Free Press ran a very short note about the death of Joe Black, the first Black pitcher to win a World Series game, in the Briefs section.

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23 An example to clarify: If one reads a story about baseball, it may, in fact, be true that the majority of this team’s players are non-whites, but this is not evident in the text of the story. Therefore, the contention is that such stories do not raise the visibility of people of colour in the print media. In contrast, photographs provide a clear indication of presence or absence and can help create, confirm and maintain the impression in readers that people of colour do play sports.

24 For photographs of professionals, The Globe and Mail runs 81% white, The London Free Press runs 85% white and La Presse runs 97% white.


This story wasn’t mentioned at all in *La Presse* or *The Globe and Mail*.

**Athletes with Disabilities**

For athletes with a disability, the opportunities to see themselves in the pages of the newspaper or on television are extremely rare. In total, mentions of athletes with a disability made up half a percent of all the stories in all the media analysed. In addition, one of those stories and an accompanying photograph were about curling skip Bryan Cochrane’s use of a whistle to win the Nokia Cup Provincial Curling Championship. The almost total absence of this segment of our sports population implies that these athletes are of no interest to audiences and their athletic endeavours only merit coverage when their events are of such a significant size that they cannot be ignored. Like women and girls, or people of colour, athletes with a disability may equate the lack of media coverage of their sports with lack of value in active participation at the local level.
It is now well proven that sporting activities contribute greatly to our physical and psychological health, not to mention to our development as individuals. We generally also expect that organized sports add to the well-being of our communities. However, various studies of people’s opinions on sport and its impact reveal that there is a gap between “the sport that we want” and “the sport that we have”.

“Sport per se, like any human activity, is neither good nor bad. Sport exists. It addresses some of mankind’s deepest needs. But sport is at the mercy of our society. It can liberate or alienate, close a gap or widen it, balance or distort, cure or kill, cause pleasure or pain, channel aggressiveness or aggravate it. Sport is not sheltered from any excess or any perversion.” (Ferran, J., 1983)

Indeed, we have the sport that we deserve. This statement usually stops us in our tracks, especially since we often look to sports to help our children and adolescents grow and develop. It is for these reasons that certain groups and individuals involved in the sporting world have decided to take action and ensure that sport becomes a true vehicle for positive values and ethical behaviour.

We will now highlight a few of those actions that individuals and communities have carried out with the aim of mining the full potential of sport as a means of helping our youth to develop.

**Case 1: The Franc Jeu Formula**

Ice hockey, like other sports, can help our youth acquire a variety of personal and group skills and abilities. But devoted minor hockey volunteers began to notice some shameful and violent conduct, as well as a worrisome deterioration in the atmosphere at arenas. They decided to look for ways to stop this trend, which was compromising the positive potential of the sport. Their deliberations and research led to the development of the Franc Jeu formula in Quebec in 1988. This system makes good conduct “bankable” by awarding points that can be used toward the outcome of the match. Today, almost 35,000 youngsters play hockey under the Franc Jeu model, and it will be implemented throughout the Quebec minor hockey system, except for provincial leagues, beginning in the 2003-2004 season.
WHY INTERVENE?

Some 200,000 Quebeckers play hockey. Of these, 90,000 boys and girls aged 5 to 20 play at least once a week in a structured environment, from beginner to elite levels, under the stewardship of Hockey Québec, the province’s ice hockey governing body. Every year, 21,000 players in that age group are injured. Some studies say that more than 70% of these injuries result from illegal plays, some penalized, some not.27

The problems and motives that gave rise to Franc Jeu can be traced back through certain observations made during the last few decades. A survey of several coaches and 2,000 players between the ages of 7 and 18 “revealed that breaking the rules and aggressive and violent behaviour are taught systematically, beginning in minor and junior hockey,” (Vaz, E., 1982)28. The fact that these behaviours are encouraged, not to mention taught, proves that players and teams consider them “useful” to their success. Other studies and reports, including that of Mr. Gilles Néron on violence in hockey, have sounded alarm bells about the deterioration of the values that hockey conveys. As an example of the magnitude of the problem, the Canadian and Quebec governments have intervened six times during the last 25 years in matters relating to violence in hockey. Each intervention aimed to study the problem and propose solutions.

In addition to concerns about the injuries and the unhealthy playing environment, it was also noticed that more players were abandoning hockey and that the number of new players was also declining. The factors cited most often for dropping out of hockey were loss of enjoyment in the sport, the inappropriate behaviour of the coach, violence and unnecessary roughness, checking, and injuries.30 These problems clinched the decision to intervene.

WHAT MEASURE WAS PROPOSED AND HOW WAS IT DETERMINED?

“If it is rewarding to break the rules in the original system, why then not make it profitable to respect the rules, as well as the opponent, in hockey? If offences and violence are used to win games, could we not instead use good sportsmanship to the same end?”31 The originators of the Franc Jeu formula used this reasoning to design a program that integrates sport ethics into the structure of hockey, using the rules of the game to do so. In brief, Franc Jeu works like this:

Points are earned based on performance (the highest number of goals scored in a game). Additional points are given for good conduct. The total number of points determines how the teams are ranked.

Points for performance are awarded based on the following traditional model:

1 victory = 2 points towards overall ranking
1 tie = 1 point towards overall ranking
1 defeat = 0 points towards overall ranking

Points awarded for good conduct are based on the number of minutes the team is penalized. The basic standard for the allowable number of penalty minutes usually depends on the category of the team. For example, the grid below shows the basic standard per game for single- and double-letter Pee-Wee categories:

- 10 or fewer penalty minutes = 2 extra points towards overall ranking
- 11 and 12 penalty minutes = 1 extra point towards overall ranking
- 13 or more penalty minutes = 0 points towards overall ranking

To sum up, any team that neglects one or both of these elements (performance or conduct) jeopardizes its chances of success.

Traditional hockey: performance = victory

Franc Jeu hockey:
performance + conduct = victory

Franc Jeu’s primary objectives are to:
- promote a sport ethic in hockey based on respect of self, of other players, of the officials, and of the rules of the game;
- reduce unacceptable behaviour;
- heighten awareness among coaches of their role as educators and improve their mentoring skills;
- create a positive working environment among the various stakeholders;
- create a secure environment that reduces injuries and psychological stress caused by intimidation, thereby increasing the pleasure of playing hockey;
- enhance hockey’s image and credibility in the eyes of parents and the public; and
- attract and retain young hockey players.

**IMPLEMENTING FRANC JEU**

The first system of its type was developed in 1979 by Mr. Gerry Breton of the Sport Services Department, Université Laval, who integrated a prototype into the University’s intramural sports program. This system placed greater emphasis on ethical rules at the team governance level. It proved so effective in promoting ethical sport that
other universities in Quebec and Canada also implemented the system.

Inspired by the experiment at Laval, Mr. Marc Beaudin, a youth sports leader, developed the “Score” formula in 1981. “Score” is also based on the principle of rewarding good conduct. It was first tried for three years in minor hockey in the North Shore region, before being disseminated throughout Quebec with the assistance of the Régie de la sécurité dans les sports du Québec (RSSQ). Some 18,000 players at the municipal, university and collegiate levels have played using this formula. Despite the interest it generated, “Score” was never significantly established in minor hockey, mainly because of its complexity.

Meanwhile, other steps were taken to clean up hockey, including promoting sportsmanship, adopting codes of ethics, eliminating checking in certain divisions, and reinforcing sanctions.

The “Score” formula was eventually simplified and, in 1988, an initiative by the president of one of the leagues led to the adoption of the new system, now renamed Franc Jeu. The official launch of Franc Jeu was in 1988 at a symposium held by the RSSQ and Hockey Québec. Gradually more players joined until, in the year 2000, there were 20,000 players involved in minor hockey alone. Efforts to promote Franc Jeu were intensified in 2000. Many promotion and implementation tools were produced, but participation in the program remained voluntary.

About 35,000 players now play using the Franc Jeu program. Hockey Québec has made Franc Jeu mandatory for minor hockey throughout the province, except for the provincial leagues, and some 75,000 players will be subject to the Franc Jeu system in the 2003-2004 season.

The impact of Franc Jeu

Comments from the hockey sector

The progress of Franc Jeu is evident from the views and reactions of the stakeholders and the evolution of the model program itself. For instance, simplifying the “Score” formula resulted in an increase in the number of participants. The promotional blitz and the support shown for Franc Jeu in 2000 also marked a milestone in the program’s popularity. These are some of the comments from the hockey sector that reflect their perceptions of the program:

Positive comments:
- improves the quality of play
- measurably reduces violence
- significantly reduces the number of offences and injuries
- a flexible, inexpensive, and easy-to-apply program

Negative comments:
- little support for management and development of the program

32 The RSSQ was dismantled in 1997. Government involvement in matters of safety now falls within the mandate of the Secrétariat au loisir et au sport.
client mistrust, misunderstood program, difficult implementation, and “We won’t be playing real hockey any more!”

- some people think that Franc Jeu has had little effect on the level of violence
- lack of tools to evaluate the program

“Franc Jeu’s” measured results:

- on offences
- on penalties called
- on injuries

Quebec’s Secrétariat au loisir et au sport is now completing its evaluation of the Franc Jeu program. The study compared the conduct of teams that play under Franc Jeu with those that do not. As the analysis of the results33 is not yet complete, we will limit our comments to some of the observations made.

Until now, results had been evaluated using only the game sheets. They showed a 20% decrease in the number of penalties for teams that used Franc Jeu. The current evaluation being completed also shows a significant reduction in the number of penalties that referees called. However, when we look at the number of rules broken, whether or not they are called as penalties, it seems that some of the players might be adapting their play to break rules that are less noticeable and therefore less apt to be called by the referee, such as holding instead of roughing or hitting.

With respect to the number of injuries, the sample of this study indicates no appreciable difference. It is important to point out that the sample used in the evaluation is composed of players in double-letter Bantam categories where checking is permitted.

**ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE OF FRANC JEU**

**Issues related to the practice of hockey**

With respect to the issues surrounding the practice of hockey itself, such as its safety, integrity, and level of participation, Franc Jeu is an attractive way to help clean up the sport and make it appealing to young people.

The decrease in the number of penalties supports the hypothesis that players will govern themselves accordingly when it is no longer “profitable” for them to break the rules. Other hypotheses still must be verified in this regard. If the players tend to commit more holding infractions instead of roughing or hitting, is it because they think there is less chance of being caught? If so, Franc Jeu might only decrease the incidence of the most violent actions, rather than decrease rule breaking overall. *Are we helping players learn to circumvent the rules instead of helping them learn sportsmanship?*

how the game evolves. Officials themselves say that they do not want their decisions to determine the outcome of the match. If the officials also adapt their conduct based on the model, should we reinforce their role? How can we restore the power the official must have without giving the impression that the official “controls” the match?

Issues related to implementing the model

With respect to implementing the model, the major challenges lie in modifying the attitudes of stakeholders and ensuring they remain involved. How can we convince parents, coaches, players, and everyone involved in the sport that hockey played without violence and with a greater respect for the rules remains “real hockey”? If the program is to be established successfully, it will likely need strong sports leadership, support, and acceptance at every level of the hockey system. The leadership role each region takes with its leagues and minor hockey associations is of utmost importance. Similarly, all stakeholders, parents, and players must be well informed about their roles. And, on the practical side, we also must keep the program as simple as possible.

Can we consider applying Franc Jeu to other disciplines?

A few local initiatives lead us to believe that the basic principle of Franc Jeu can be applied to other types of sports. In fact, a few football and lacrosse leagues, as well as an intramural university league, follow the principle that “good conduct has an effect on the outcome of the game” and, by extension, on the success of the team. The mechanics sometimes differ from those of Franc Jeu, but the underlying principle remains the same.

**Conclusion**

Although this first evaluation does not hold all the answers about the real impact of the model, we can assume the following:

Making sports-related violence “non-productive” is an option worth considering.

The simplicity and the structure of the model would make it attractive to other disciplines that seek to reduce violence and re-establish the value of sportsmanship at the forefront of their sport.

In order to have a significant impact, establishing such a model must receive the best support possible. That is why the Quebec government decided to support extending the program to virtually the entire minor hockey movement. In this way, Franc Jeu will no longer be a “marginal” way of playing hockey.

It is crucial that we continue to evaluate the effects of Franc Jeu if we want to measure whether it has reached its objectives and be able to react to any unexpected effects of implementing the program. We must also determine how such a model affects the nature and culture of sport.

**Case 2: Fair Play in Minor Hockey – Dartmouth Whalers Minor Hockey Association**

A number of minor hockey organizations in Canada invest time, money and energy in promoting Fair Play in sports. Being
particularly concerned about safety and respect in sports, the Dartmouth Whalers Minor Hockey Association (DWMHA) has implemented a program to promote Fair Play based on five principles:

- respect the opponents
- respect the officials and their decisions
- respect the rules
- have everyone participate
- maintain your self-control at all times

This program aims to reduce injuries and suspensions and create a positive environment for playing hockey.

**Why intervene?**

The program to promote Fair Play was created because of the negative attitudes and behaviours observed at minor hockey games. Such things as spectators criticizing referees and screaming abuse at players, players being deprived of regular playing time during games, coaches yelling at players, the increase in the number of suspensions and injuries, along with disrespect for others involved in minor hockey led the DWMHA to take concrete action. The DWMHA wanted hockey games to be a positive experience, creating happy memories for young people and other members of the community.

Minor hockey should be perceived not as a farm club for the National Hockey League, but as an opportunity for young people to play a game they love in a positive, safe and stimulating environment. It is also hoped that minor hockey associations will be seen as organizations run by volunteers that provide a recreational opportunity for young children and adolescents within the community. In short, minor hockey should be played safely, with respect, and with the object of having FUN. Winning at any cost, especially at the expense of other players, should be the exception, not the norm.

**What measure was proposed and how was it determined?**

In order to curb the negative behaviour observed at minor hockey games, a small group of executive members of the DWMHA, who were especially concerned about this problem, decided in 1994 to put a program in place to promote Fair Play. The objective was to make minor hockey as positive an experience as possible for children. It was hoped that players would come away from their time spent in minor hockey with the memory of positive experiences foremost in their minds, rather than the scores.

Volunteers first looked for programs that might achieve these objectives. The only concept meeting the requirements and objectives of the volunteers was promotion of Fair Play. The group decided to develop a program based upon the five principles of Fair Play as listed above, which provided the
program’s philosophy. Assistance was sought from the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission (NSSRC) to create and validate such a program.

The program was comprised of a series of interventions including:

- displaying banners and signs in arenas to advertise and educate participants about the program;
- a new process for selecting coaches;
- the signing of team contracts emphasizing the rights, responsibilities, obligations and privileges of players, coaches and parents;
- a pre-season meeting for coaches and managers, and pre-season meetings for all teams;
- a public announcement before each game introducing the officials and coaches and promoting Fair Play;
- a Team Assessment Form completed by a different parent for each game; this form deals with behaviour of players, coaches and officials during the game and feedback on Fair Play issues;
- a Referee Assessment Form completed by officials at each local game;
- a monthly award for the team that displays exemplary behaviour;
- a monthly newsletter on Fair Play distributed to all participants; and
- a Fair Play support team made up of volunteers who are not executive members of the DWMHA to investigate issues of Fair Play.

A program aimed at junior officials was subsequently launched in response to the major problem of the number of officials leaving the minor hockey league. Fair Play was also the basis for developing a positive environment and providing solid support for young people to acquire and develop skills as officials.

In order to promote the concept with the DWMHA executive, the initial volunteer group also solicited the support of the Nova Scotia Minor Hockey Council, Nova Scotia Hockey, the Canadian Hockey Association, other local minor hockey associations, businesses and the media, as well as minor hockey participants locally and regionally. There were many meetings and presentations on the Fair Play program, many media interviews were given, many proposals were put forward and an education program was launched for participants.

**IMPLEMENTING FAIR PLAY IN MINOR HOCKEY**

In order to launch the program, funding was obtained from the local business community. Pets Unlimited, a company that believes in Fair Play values for young people, agreed to support the launch of the program with $4,000. In addition, the NSSRC also provided support in the form of personnel, advice and funds for a participant survey.

The following year, $15,000 was provided by the Dr. Tom Pashby Sports Safety Fund based in Toronto. Those funds were used to
promote the program outside the DWMHA and supported the development of a website about Fair Play in sports as well as the publication of a Fair Play manual for minor hockey. Five thousand manuals were distributed across Canada to minor hockey organizations.

In 1994, the Novice and Atom divisions, representing some 300 players, were brought into the Fair Play in Minor Hockey Program. From the start of the program, the DWMHA leadership believed that implementing a Fair Play promotion program within a large organization should be a long-term effort to ensure success. After the 1994-95 season, a questionnaire was distributed at random to players and parents to determine whether the Fair Play in Minor Hockey Program should be continued. Over 83% of respondents strongly approved the program’s continuation.

Once the DWMHA’s Fair Play program had been developed, it became important to involve other associations, especially local ones. The first two years were difficult for DWMHA participants because the Whalers were the only association with a Fair Play promotion program. Other associations had to be encouraged and informed before they could move ahead with such a program and expect it to be a success. The Pashby group provided funding to continue the project. As a result, two years later the program was implemented in the Pee Wee division, and in the Bantam division in 1998. It was extended to the Midget division during the 2000-2001 season.

At the Nova Scotia provincial finals, as of 2002-2003, each division receives a Fair Play banner to be given to the team that best demonstrates Fair Play principles during each championship tournament. This banner is given by the Nova Scotia Minor Hockey Council, which oversees all minor hockey activity in the province. Finally, at each annual general meeting, a Fair Play award is given to Dartmouth Whalers players in the Novice, Atom, Pee Wee, Bantam, Midget and Female divisions.

The Fair Play in Minor Hockey Program has thus been gradually phased in within the DWMHA. The plan was to not involve all divisions of the DWMHA at the same time. It was judged important to have the program grow with the participants who were first involved with Fair Play as they moved up through the divisions. The DWMHA executive was also committed to the program. Fair Play in Minor Hockey was made an integral part of the Whalers’ hockey program. Registration forms identified the Whalers as a Fair Play association, and participants, coaches and parents were informed and kept aware on a regular basis. A number of new procedures were introduced by the DWMHA, including a manual on the process for selecting coaches and a settlement procedure for Fair Play disputes.

**The impact of the Fair Play in Minor Hockey Program**

The program is expanding

Over the years, the Fair Play in Minor Hockey Program has been adopted by many
minor hockey associations throughout Canada, the United States, Europe, Australia and in other countries. In addition, other sports, such as baseball, soccer and squash, brought Fair Play promotion programs to their sports associations using the DWMHA model.

The DWMHA Fair Play promotion program has also been covered by the media over the years: television (CBC, CTV), newspapers and radio.

Performance, suspensions, injuries

In the first five years of the program’s existence, the DWMHA received more provincial hockey titles than in the previous ten years when there was no Fair Play promotion program in place. Overall, suspensions dropped 40% during those five years. No injury statistics have been compiled, but the organization thinks it can reasonably be assumed that promoting Fair Play has had a positive impact on the reduction of injuries in the Association.

A significant impact on officials

Since the Fair Play in Minor Hockey program and the junior officiating program have been in place, the reasons for officials leaving the DWMHA are almost always going to university, moving to a new location or work commitments. No official has left the DWMHA junior referee program due to abuse by participants. This contrasts with some parts of Canada where the dropout rate for minor hockey officials runs as high as 50%. In the DWMHA, the biggest problem with officials is that there aren’t enough positions for all the applicants. Every season, the DWMHA needs 6 to 10 new officials and the organization provides tryouts for officials. At the start of each year, between 30 and 40 people try out for the 6 to 10 positions available in the junior officials program, a marked contrast with the rest of Canada, where lack of officials is a major problem.

It should be noted that the Canadian Hockey Association has recognized the DWMHA junior officials program.

Issues, challenges and the future of the program

Issues relating to the practice of the sport

It should be kept in mind that the object of Fair Play in Minor Hockey is to promote and improve SAFETY and RESPECT within the four groups of participants involved in all minor hockey programs, i.e., players, parents, coaches and officials.

As far as safety is concerned, it seems logical to believe that the significant drop (40%) in the number of suspensions is indicative of fewer illegal plays, and thus less violence. However, it is problematic to automatically assume a drop in injuries. A comparative study of teams that do and do not have the Fair Play program would enable more accurate conclusions on the impact the program is having on participant safety. We may nevertheless assume that there has been some improvement in this area, because approximately 30% of injuries
in contact sports are caused by illegal plays subject to penalty.\textsuperscript{34}

Critical issues linked to the practice of hockey are performance and winning. Many believe that respecting Fair Play leads to less aggressiveness (in the sense of the desire to win necessary in sports competition), and thus compromises the player’s and the team’s success. Based on the Whalers’ performance since the program has been in place, it appears that it has not had any negative effects on their desire to win. On the other hand, to attribute the success of teams to the Fair Play program is a big stretch, and other factors may be at work.

The program’s impact seems more obvious when it comes to an increase in respect. The desire of participants to continue the program, the significant drop in suspensions, successful recruitment of officials and the interest shown in the program by other hockey associations and groups from other sports show that the program has improved the environment in the sports community.

\textit{Implementation issues}

It appears that the success of the program’s implementation and its popularity are linked to the fact that the following issues were addressed particularly well:

- substantial financial support from interested partners;
- the interest of participants in being a part of the program (first-year survey);
- the importance of proper coach selection;
- the importance of reaching all key target audiences, especially coaches (the series of interventions proposed reached them all);
- putting it into action in the field; this played an important role in program implementation – it wasn’t just a matter of posting signs and distributing flyers; and
- a phased approach, involving organizations in the program gradually and beginning with the younger groups.

The DWMHA experience also points to the importance of understanding the concerns people have about this sort of program. Promoters must show that Fair Play in no way alters chances of winning or the desire to win. Some resistance on the part of older coaches may be expected.

Another implementation issue is the fact that the opinion of the silent majority (people who do not express their opinion but do support the program) must be sought. It seems, in fact, that those who disagree with some of the coaches’ actions do not want to talk about it for fear that their child may later be discriminated against. It appears that the activation of the silent majority was one of the key components of success, so it is important to keep engaging that group.

\textsuperscript{34} Fédération québécoise de hockey sur glace inc. \textit{Jouons Franc Jeu pour un hockey plus humain}, Montréal. 1988.
**Conclusion**

A number of other minor hockey associations have adopted the DWMHA model. This model was designed to respond to the particular needs of minor hockey and has had a positive impact on thousands of minor hockey players around the world over the past nine years. In addition, the principle is easily transferable to other sports and has, in fact, been applied in other disciplines and in other countries. A more detailed evaluation of the program would validate some assumptions, such as those relating to impact on the behaviour and safety of participants.

**Case 3: Dynamic Opportunities for Youth**

Sport is recognized as a means of furthering human development. Engaging in a sport is a formative experience because it prepares us for living in society. Dynamic Opportunities for Youth (DOY) is a national rowing program designed to share the lessons and benefits of sport with youth at risk. DOY takes a proactive stance in helping these youth by making a sport and its benefits more easily accessible. In a positive and challenging learning environment, at-risk youth are taught to value their role in a team and to make good choices in their daily lives beyond sport.

**Why intervene?**

Youth who are struggling or at risk are a source of concern across the country. The financial and behavioural problems that are generally observed among these youth prompted the creators of the project and their partners to offer a program that would teach positive values to the participants and help them adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Aimed at youth aged 12 to 18 who are considered to be at risk, the program uses sport, in particular rowing, as the main vehicle for imparting these values. Ideal candidates have positive attitudes but, due to unfortunate circumstances, have not had many opportunities in life and often must face problems that they cannot overcome alone. The program promoters also believe that all young people should have the chance to become involved in playing sports and benefit from the experience.

**What measure was proposed and how was it determined?**

The DOY program focuses on certain themes that address the special needs of youth at risk, such as self-esteem, teamwork, trust, personal challenge, discipline, and fair play.

Dynamic Opportunities for Youth is sponsored by Dynamic Mutual Funds, supported by Sport Canada, and provided by Foundation 2000 Plus, in partnership with Optimist Clubs of Canada, the Rock Solid Foundation, and Rowing Canada. Silken Laumann is the Ambassador of the program.

With the support of Dynamic Mutual Funds and Sport Canada, Foundation 2000 Plus is able to provide the program in 14 rowing centres in different locations across Canada: Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montréal.
Through this support, the program can be offered free of charge and is accessible to more candidates. Many participants are disadvantaged and would not otherwise be able to participate in extracurricular activities.

The program is based on the premise that sport, and rowing in particular, presents a good opportunity to learn certain lessons that can be transported into daily life. Also, rowing can be practiced either recreationally or competitively. While regattas may sometimes be held, the primary goal of the program is not competition, but rather to introduce at-risk youth throughout Canada to the benefits of engaging in a sport.

**Implementing the Dynamic Opportunities for Youth Program**

In 1998, Foundation 2000 Plus initiated a rowing program for youth at risk at the Gorge Rowing and Paddling Centre in Victoria, British Columbia. Since then, by working with local schools and a youth-violence-prevention organization called the Rock Solid Foundation, the program has expanded and now invites selected youth to attend the rowing centre for a free ten-session program.

Implementing the program consists mainly of finding the right participants in schools and youth outreach centres, hiring and training instructors, carrying out ten rowing sessions followed by sessions focused on learning life skills, and a wrap-up party.

Since most at-risk students meet regularly with a school counsellor, the school boards, principals, and counsellors are in a good position to recruit candidates for the program.

Certain criteria must also be followed when selecting coaches. Leadership and communication skills take precedence over technical coaching ability. Coaches are briefed by Foundation 2000 Plus and the Rock Solid Foundation to prepare them for the special needs of at-risk youth and to help them base their activities on the chosen themes. Their goal is to help youth interpret the lessons learned at the rowing centre with respect to the key themes, and to apply those lessons to their daily lives beyond sport. Each session contains a technical skill element, as well as an element that deals with the importance of goal-setting, teamwork and discipline. Also, given their particular situation, healthy snacks are provided to the participants at each session to ensure that they have enough “fuel” for rowing.

The program wraps up with a fun day on the water where participants can try racing against one another and invite crews from other groups for a fun row with new acquaintances. An awards ceremony can follow.
**Impact of the Dynamic Opportunities for Youth Program**

**General**

In light of the favourable impact on participants and the positive comments from schools, and thanks to the support of Dynamic Mutual Funds and Sport Canada, this program is now offered in various regions across the country. This network can accommodate some 270 young participants.

**Feedback**

Comments from participants and expressions of interest in receiving support to continue rowing are gathered using a Feedback/Scholarship Form. Comments from the counsellors/teachers are gathered using a separate Feedback Questionnaire. The vast majority of comments are positive. One hundred percent of the counsellors and teachers have noticed an improvement in self-esteem, teamwork, and/or discipline within their groups.

**Issues, Challenges and the Future of the Program**

**Issues concerning the practice of the sport**

Since the primary objectives of the program are not to improve conduct within the sport, but focus rather on transmitting core values through engaging in sports, there are no specific issues concerning the way in which the sport is practiced. Sport is used here as a means of educating. We must assume, though, that the sport that the participants will be practicing is free of the type of problems that could compromise the benefits generally associated with playing a sport. It is important that the youth counsellors and coaches are vigilant against physical or psychological violence, doping, abuse of any kind, or any other lack of sportsmanship. Clearly, such situations would destroy the educational value that the program seeks to establish.

The coaches must also bear in mind that the priority of the DOY is not to train champion rowers. Although the program does emphasize discipline and personal challenge, the instructors must guard against pursuing performance goals at all costs and must not lose sight of the program’s overarching mission.

**Issues concerning the implementation of the program**

In successfully implementing such a program, the organizers will face issues and challenges. The most obvious are the following:

- Offering free access to the program. This aspect will determine the success of the program, given that it targets disadvantaged youth.
- Being equipped with a Community Consultative Committee. The members of this committee play a very important role in all aspects of program development and promotion. The varied membership (business people, Olympic athletes, law enforcement officers, the media, counsellors, teachers, etc.) seeks grants and volunteers, approaches business people, recruits speakers, organizes parties, and so on.
- Receiving support, other than financial.
- Maintaining contact with school authorities, since they can more readily identify at-risk youth.
- Providing transportation for the participants.

The way in which the instructors take part is also a crucial element of the program. Dealing with youth at risk requires a certain degree of competence. Along with technical aptitudes, instructors must have excellent communication and leadership skills. It seems that instructors should also be well paid for the work they do.

One of the keys to the success of the program is whether the participants are enjoying themselves. Simple as it sounds, young people want to have fun and it is essential that the program concentrate on this aspect.

Concerning the possibility of extending this type of program to other sports, it appears that the concept would lend itself quite well to other disciplines, as long as the chosen sport does not place too great an emphasis on competition. Generally, youth at risk seem to avoid competition. This is easy to do with rowing, but might present a problem with other sports. In soccer or hockey, for example, victory and scoring would have to be de-emphasized.

The philosophy of this program could also apply to other age groups, with different themes appropriate to the participants’ ages.

In short, the aim of the program is in itself an important issue. By practicing rowing, the young participants from disadvantaged backgrounds go through experiences that contribute to acquiring or improving personal skills such as self-respect, respect for others, confidence, personal challenge, competition, and discipline. Transporting these abilities beyond the sport is also an ambitious challenge. This is why the activities offered must allow the participants to interpret the lessons they learn at the rowing centre and apply them to their daily life.

The mechanisms for evaluating the program consist mainly of using feedback forms to gather impressions from the counsellors/teachers and participants. Since no specific indicators exist to track the evolution of a participant from the time he or she joins the program through to the end of the activities, it is difficult to know exactly how the program measures up against its stated objectives. Indeed, it is painstaking work to verify, in the daily life of young people, whether various skills have been integrated, either in the short, medium, or long term. The difficulty is compounded as the participants can no longer be tracked after they have left the program.

Otherwise, the comments about DOY are very positive and highlight the improvements in attitude and behaviour of the participants, particularly in the areas of school attendance, scholastic achievement, self-esteem, and cooperation. The young people themselves have expressed satisfaction at having participated in a rewarding activity, and at having learned through concentration, determination and teamwork.
CONCLUSION

The 2002 report of Foundation 2000 Plus shows that the DOY program has been successful in expanding its reach, promoting itself, obtaining media coverage, and involving its partners and the community. It is obvious that DOY has created interest that continues to grow across Canada. The number of positive comments received is also encouraging.

On the other hand, it would be relevant and useful to find a way of measuring more accurately how effective the program has been in integrating certain attitudes and skills in the participants’ everyday life, since this is the primary goal of the program. An evaluation would have to determine whether these attitudes and skills are too difficult to measure. If so, it may be possible to establish secondary goals that are more easily measured using precise indicators, while maintaining the goal of contributing to the development of youth.

CASE 4: KUGLUKTUK HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

Concerned by the delinquency, drug and alcohol problems and high suicide rate in their community, the teachers and coaches of Kugluktuk High School established the Kugluktuk High School Athletics Association (KHSAA). Through positive reinforcement, the Association uses sport to promote healthy lifestyles and a healthy community.

To encourage students to support the Association and get involved, steps were taken to ensure students had a feeling of ownership over the project. From their experience in sport, coaches knew that a feeling of belonging instills pride and reinforces being a member of a team.

WHY INTERVENE?

Kugluktuk, Nunavut, is a community of 1,300 people, 600 of them under the age of 20. For several years, the community has had the highest suicide rate in the North. Many youth have been involved in drugs and alcohol. There have been high rates of teenage pregnancy, high dropout rates and a lot of crime. In addition, it was noticed that talented athletes, for one reason or another, were dropping out of school, turning to alcohol and drugs, and making other unhealthy choices.

WHAT MEASURE WAS PROPOSED AND HOW WAS IT DETERMINED?

The KSHAA has been operating for two years, but the idea of forming an association with its mission existed before that. Some of the coaches were managing their teams on similar principles, but it wasn’t until they worked together and combined their resources that they were able to see dramatic changes. They wanted an organization that would enable youth to participate in sport, while realizing that sport was not the only thing students needed. Students also needed an education; they wanted a program that would use sport to help keep young people in school.

As community members, and as teachers and coaches, they felt an obligation to work towards providing students with as many
opportunities as possible for their future. With this in mind, the KHSAA drew up its mission:

- to promote sport;
- to enhance opportunities and improve lifestyles;
- to promote teamwork;
- to enrich academics through extracurricular activities;
- to provide continuity and stability; and
- to promote and create healthy lifestyles.

Before the program was introduced, volleyball, basketball and soccer teams already existed. Individual coaches did their own fundraising in order to help their teams go to tournaments. As their community is in an isolated area, participating in tournaments is very expensive. It costs at least $5,000 per team to take part in tournaments outside the region.

As a result, the KHSAA decided to combine the coaches’ efforts and do collective fundraising to increase opportunity for participation in tournaments – and with more opportunity for participation, the youth would have to take on greater responsibilities. It was decided that all members in the KHSAA (both those on teams and those not on teams) would have to meet basic requirements in order to achieve and maintain membership status. To remain members, students need to maintain a minimum school attendance of 80% and have an average of seven out of ten or above on their school performance log, which rates their attitude, effort and behaviour. Students also need to lead a healthy lifestyle and be respectable members of the community.

**Implementing the Kugluktuk High School Athletics Association**

Recognizing that before students would join the association, they had to feel ownership over it and identify with it, coaches and teachers had students participate in every part of the project. They organized the following activities:

The students created an identity for the Association by choosing the name Grizzlies, and a logo. The logo proved to be key to the success of the entire program.

The name was painted in various places throughout the school. Promotion of the new identity was crucial to developing excitement in the school and establishing the Grizzly name.

A formal banquet was held to honour the athletes. Each athlete got prime seating. Awards were given out for distinctions such as Athlete of the Year, Best Attendance, Most Improved Person and Healthy Lifestyle.

An arcade called the Grizzly Den was opened. This business is student-owned and operated and all employees are students. All profits go into the Athletics Association. The arcade provides a safe environment for young people of all ages.

A new “Grizzly” line of clothing was developed featuring everything from toques to baby clothes. The Association has begun
the process of branching out into areas such as traditional crafts and music.

As their feeling of involvement increased, students became addicted to the success of meeting high but attainable expectations. Not only were they gaining success as athletes, they were also becoming successful students. Success breeds success. Students’ feelings of self-esteem and self-worth increased substantially.

Through bingos, dances, and merchandise sales, they raised $83,000 during the 2001-2002 school year. This money sent 23 students to the Arctic Winter Games, 38 to the Nunavut Territorials and 14 to Edmonton for a lacrosse tournament. In addition, volunteers worked more than 2,000 hours in the year 2000 alone to help the youth of the community.

The Association has been supported by various organizations in Kugluktuk and Nunavut. It has received funding from several government and non-government organizations including the Recreation Committee, the Hamlet, the Department of Sustainable Development, the Kitikmeot Economic Development Corporation and Nunavut Tunnagvik Incorporated. The RCMP, as part of its community relations plan, has spent many hours assisting the Association and interacting with students.

**Impact of the Kugluktuk High School Athletics Association**

The Association has noticed startling improvements on two fronts: the individual success of members and increased school attendance. Statistics show that during the 2000-2001 school year, 24% of students averaged over 80% attendance. During the 2001-2002 school year, this proportion rose to 46%, followed by 57% in 2002-2003. This year, 35% more students are on track to graduate than in 2000.

A recent survey administered to members of the Association reveals that the impact of the KHSAA program has been positive. The survey shows that:

- 68% of members felt that membership had positively impacted their attendance;
- 70% of members felt that membership had positively impacted their behaviour;
- 85% of members felt that they had become better people since becoming members; and
- according to students, the top three personal benefits of membership were: increased school attendance, more involvement in sport and the extras that came with being a member (travel and clothing).

It is important to remember that these students benefit from opportunities that would otherwise be out of their reach.
Another statistic the organizers consider a sign of the KHSAA’s positive impact is the fact that there has not been a single teenage completed suicide since the KHSAA was set up in 2001-2002.

There are currently 76 student members, representing half of the high school population. Twenty-six athletes participated in the last Arctic Winter Games. In 2002, there were only 18 lacrosse players, whereas this year there were 61.

**Issues, Challenges and the Future of the Kugluktuk High School Athletics Association**

**Issues specific to the practice of sport**

Given that the community is wrestling with a variety of social problems and young people’s indifference to academics, the aim of the KHSAA program is to improve lifestyle choices and increase school attendance. Since sport is a vehicle for attaining these goals, there will be no changes made in how sports are played. Therefore, there are no issues exclusive to the practice of sport. However, since sport is being used to promote healthy lifestyle choices, an effort has to be made to keep sport free of problems like violence, drugs and all forms of abuse, which contravene ethics in sport.

**Issues related to the implementation of the program**

One of the biggest hurdles facing the promoters of a program like this is how to get young people who have low self-esteem to adopt the concept of team spirit. What’s more, in Aboriginal communities, many people do not consider school an imperative. Therefore it is challenging to find effective incentives that not only keep young people in school but also encourage them to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

In addition to the substantial funding needed to implement the program, there had to be widespread voluntary participation on the part of everyone from coaches to administrators. The program relies on the participation of coaches and teachers and the significance their involvement has for youth.

It is also important to keep in mind how crucial community support is to the program’s success. This was a particularly important issue for the person establishing the KHSAA, given a community’s natural wariness of outsiders. Disillusioned by previous outside initiatives that failed, the people of the community need to see proof of good faith before giving their support. They need to see that the program serves the community’s well-being rather than the interests of the person developing the program. In the present case, the Band Council and the recreation directors were consulted before the KHSAA was set up. And to counter any negative perception about its goals, the KHSAA supports the community in other causes.

The KHSAA’s mission is a major concern to the promoters of the program. The mission must constantly be reaffirmed in the face of conflicting interests that may arise. To get others involved, organizers must ensure the people recruited support the mission while also remaining open to
their input. They must work in a spirit of cooperation.

The program cannot rest on one person’s shoulders. In Kugluktuk, people are afraid of losing the program director for fear of losing the program as well. A successor must be chosen in order to ensure the program’s continuity.

This type of program can be extended to other sports, regardless of the type of sport. It is the program’s philosophy that counts. The main goal is getting young people to join sports organizations that give them the motivation necessary to stay in school and choose healthy lifestyles.

Young people in the community have to be convinced of the concrete benefits they will enjoy if they choose a healthy lifestyle in order to take part in the program.

**Conclusion**

The Association is proud of the success of its members and athletes. It has developed formal and informal ways of recognizing their skills and acknowledging the changes they make in their lives. The KHSAA’s policy is to recognize such day-to-day victories as attending school, making an effort and staying positive, which is in itself a major hurdle for the community.

Judging by attendance records and feedback, the KHSAA program offers a valuable method for solving the problems experienced by the community. The program should be evaluated in terms of the link between participation in the program and behavioral changes observed off the playing field. Are they lasting changes? Can they be attributed exclusively to the program? A more detailed study of the program’s impact would serve to help those who implement and run it, so they can modify their approach in line with changing social circumstances.

**Other Program Examples**

There are, of course, other noteworthy programs across the country that promote positive and enriching sport experiences for young people. The following brief descriptions of four other community sport programs further illustrate the diversity of focus and approach.

**JustPlay**

The JustPlay program is designed to help sport associations improve the recruitment and retention of officials, decrease liability and increase safety. A program with these objectives is of value in and of itself. However, there are also benefits in JustPlay’s underlying focus on promoting and evaluating ethical behaviour and changing attitudes through a practical approach implemented at the community level.

Officials complete the JustPlay Conduct Report Cards after each game, using a five-point scale (one being very good and five being very poor) to rate the behaviour of coaches, players and spectators towards the officials and their comfort/satisfaction level with their overall experience during the game. The Conduct Report Cards are collected and entered into the JustPlay...
database that is used to generate a variety of conduct and incident reports on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Analyzed reports identify trends or behavioural situations that the sport association should address. These reports are now easily accessible through a password-protected section on the JustPlay website.

JustPlay was implemented as a pilot project with the minor hockey association in Pelham, Ontario from December 2001 to April 2002. Specific problem sources and behaviour trends were identifiable through the database reports. The association held four roundtable meetings with coaches, trainers and team managers to discuss these trends and the results have been promising based on preliminary information. As well, the relationship between the minor hockey association and the officials seemed to improve.

The JustPlay program has expanded into two more communities: Welland and St. Catharines, Ontario. Currently three officials’ associations and five minor hockey associations use the JustPlay program.

Adapted Gymnastics Program

Children with disabilities need opportunities to experience physical activity within community settings and gain the associated social, physical and cognitive benefits. A senior level teacher/administrator in North Vancouver was looking for a program that provided these children with an opportunity to explore and develop their physical abilities away from the classroom. In response to this objective, the local school district and Flicka Gymnastics Club created the Adapted Gymnastics Program.

The program operates during the school year and allows children with disabilities to go out into the community with their school aide to learn and enjoy gymnastics. As a result, they also learn more about appropriate risk taking and social interaction and increase their self-confidence. The program serves 40-45 children per year, providing physical and supportive benefits to the participants. Since establishing this initiative, other gymnasts who are able-bodied and their parents have gained a greater understanding and appreciation for the abilities of the children participating in the Adapted Gymnastics Program.

Goulbourn Aquatic Club

With the opening of a new recreation facility in Stittsville, Ontario in September 2000, the President of the Goulbourn Aquatic Club (GAC) initiated the process of creating an alternative swimming program that would provide a positive sport experience, support the pursuit of excellence without excessive pressures, and be free of harassment.

Using a holistic, values-based approach called Collaborative Community Coaching (C3), the Board of Directors created a new generalized swimming development program. The C3 approach focuses on values and character-building, play and fun, and developing and sustaining a democratic process that fosters a strong and respectful sense of community within the club. As part of the new program, the GAC hired a full-
time professional coach with a compatible coaching philosophy and a solid reputation for ethical conduct. The GAC also hired and trained all new coaching staff who could contribute positively to the program.

In order to assess the new approach and the club’s progress, the GAC conducted an interview with the head coach and reviewed data reported through the program. The results were excellent – parents and participants expressed greater satisfaction with the program and this feedback was complemented by an increase in program intake (growth of 50% in 2002) and a reduced attrition rate (less than 5% dropout rate). Athletes also showed a greater respect for each other in their personal interactions, particularly on the pool deck and at competitions.

**Financial/Equipment Subsidy Programs**

Due to a variety of reasons including financial constraints, underprivileged youth find themselves excluded from participating in sport. According to the 2002 Public Opinion Survey on Youth and Sport\(^{35}\), 30% of respondents identified that the high cost of participation, lack of resources/facilities and lack of funding were serious problems facing community sport. While many associations attempt to absorb the costs of participation by underprivileged youth, this is becoming more and more difficult especially in the face of rising facility fees.

Across Canada, there are excellent programs that facilitate youth inclusion in sport by providing financial and/or equipment support. The KidSport Fund is an organization that assists children through a financial contribution. Based in British Columbia, with chapters in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, PEI, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories, the KidSport Fund provides maximum contributions of $100 towards registration fees. Since 1993, the British Columbia chapter alone has allocated $1,000,000 to 10,000 kids between the ages of 6 to 18.

Sport Yukon recognized that financial resources were limiting participation by families in sporting, recreational and cultural activities. In 1999, Sport Yukon created the Kids Recreation Fund (KRF) to help families in need by providing up to $200 per child, per activity, to a maximum of $300 per year. In the first year, the KRF distributed $40,000 to support 250 youth participating in activities of their choice. In 2001-2002, the KRF climbed to $108,000 through a combination of fundraising, donations and government contributions. The total contribution numbers demonstrate the success of this program: $175,000 spent to assist 1,500 youth.

In Edmonton, community-minded business people took a different approach to helping underprivileged youth participate in sport. They noticed a disturbing trend in 1991. Youth were hanging out at hockey rinks and ball fields, but not participating in sport. One of the main reasons was that many youth could not afford the cost of

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\(^{35}\) CCES - 2002 Canadian Public Opinion Survey on Youth and Sport, Decima Research
equipment in order to participate. Their solution was to create a community-based organization, Sport Central, that would be able to loan underprivileged youth equipment to play their favourite sport. Since opening their doors in 1991, the program has been accessed by over 50,000 youth. Sport Central has a variety of equipment available for youth involved in sports such as hockey, soccer, softball and biking.

Final Conclusion

Issues, Challenges, Prospects, and Areas of Inquiry to Explore

As the program examples and models in this paper show, the initiatives aimed at getting the most out of sport’s educational and formative potential arise from two types of objectives. The first type involves using sport as a vehicle for transposing certain values to daily life. This kind of program doesn’t necessarily try to change the behaviours observed within the practice of sport, but rather uses sport as a source of life lessons. The second type of objective, which involves setting up new models of practice or programs within a sport, results from a desire to change behaviour that is considered unacceptable in athletes and the people around them.

This distinction can be useful in the sense that, in the second type of program, the issues and dilemmas regarding the practice of sport itself are emphasized. If, in trying to obtain “the sport we want,” we change the rules of a sport or certain well-established practices within that sport, we could meet resistance that threatens the success of the program. As pointed out in Cases 1 and 2, promoters of programs like this must find a happy medium between introducing new rules or new behaviours and respecting the sport’s nature and culture. The example of hockey is telling. The hockey community must not feel that nature of the sport will be changed and that a new model of practice will affect their desire to win and, ultimately, their chance of victory. This can be a pressing issue in some contexts.

Other issues arise in cases where we try to change behaviours within a sport. For example, how can we make violence unproductive, especially in team sports where contact is allowed and is part of the strategy? How can we make it so that good behaviours are rewarded and bad behaviours penalized? The Fair Play model (Case 1) offers a potential solution, but it is important to make sure that no harmful effects are introduced along with the model. Players or referees could make adaptations that might compromise the desired goals. Promoting sportsmanship also seems to be a useful tool for getting the most out of the formative potential of sport. The implementation and success of this type of program depend on the involvement of all people concerned, especially coaches, officials and parents. Community events are also a determining factor in the program’s impact. Simply putting up posters will not bring people on-side. The variety of events included in the Dartmouth Whalers’ program seems to give results, especially in
the way the concept is adopted by the clientele and even the community at large.

Whatever type of program is introduced, the issue of financial and volunteer support is essential. To get this support, the promoters must convince potential supporters that the mission is valid and make sure they understand and accept it. In cases where the entire community is targeted (Cases 3 and 4), it appears that support for the mission is even more of a deciding factor. The program must fulfill a need. Programs based on sport as a formative tool and vehicle for values (Cases 3 and 4) seem to fulfill a need, and reported reactions leave us optimistic about their positive impact on lifestyle choices and behaviours off the playing field. However, since these programs are fairly new, a more in-depth and long-term evaluation would be worthwhile to determine their impact vis-à-vis their goals.

The public opinion poll commissioned by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport reveals that people would like a change of attitude in the sporting world. In real life, however, their behaviour does not always match their good intentions. The cult of celebrity, the win-at-all-costs attitude, enormous stakes and other factors can distort the goal they claim to pursue, which is well-balanced personal development through sport.

Some people believe that sport naturally serves as a vehicle for education, health and sportsmanship, but the fact is these values are not automatically transmitted through sport. It all depends on how sport is encouraged, managed, taught and practiced.
Background

As input for planning The Sport We Want Symposium, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport held regional consultations across the country in June and July 2003: in Winnipeg (June 13), Toronto (June 14), Halifax (June 21), Richmond (June 28) and Montreal (July 5). The consultations were conducted in partnership with, respectively, Sport Manitoba; Nova Scotia Health Promotion, Sport and Recreation; Sport Alliance of Ontario; British Columbia Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services; and Secrétariat au Loisir et au Sport and Sports-Québec.

Each regional consultation was attended by 15 to 22 participants, including youth athletes, parents, coaches, officials, teachers, sport administrators, volunteers and sponsors of community sport. The actual mix of participants was largely sport administrators and teachers, many of whom were also coaches, officials, volunteers and/or parents of youth involved in community sport.

The objectives of the regional consultations were:
- To review and validate the six focus papers commissioned for the Symposium.
- To get input for planning the Symposium being held in Ottawa in September 2003.

Participants were provided with condensed summaries of the six papers to read prior to attending the consultations, along with key questions that would be considered at the meetings.

This report summarizes the key points raised at the regional meetings. The meetings varied somewhat in format, with input from the first two meetings used to refine the process for the remaining three. Variations in approach are explained under the relevant sections below. As the approaches varied across the country and the views represented in this report are those of a relatively small number of people, they are indicative of existing views, but should not be considered definitive.

Expectations and Gaps in Community Sport

Participants were asked a series of questions about the benefits that they and other Canadians have come to expect from youth sports, both from an individual and a community point of view. They were then asked to identify the largest gaps between
their expectations and the realities they witness in their communities, and to identify the specific challenges or barriers that prevent youth from experiencing the full potential of community sport. This discussion was based on the issue paper, *Realizing the Expectations: Youth, Character, and Community in Canadian Sport* by Peter Donnelly, Ph.D. and Bruce Kidd, Ph.D.

**Benefits to Individuals**

A number of benefits were highlighted as “need to have” across all consultations. They are:

- fun (identified as “need to have” in 90% of responses)
- fair play (identified as “need to have” in 89% of responses)
- respect (identified as “need to have” in 85% of responses)
- health (identified as “need to have” in 77% of responses)
- honesty (identified as “need to have” in 75% of responses)

Several other benefits were suggested by participants in three or more sessions: (These are not included in the chart below, as comparisons cannot be made between benefits suggested by participants, and those provided by organizers for ranking.)

- skill development (key to learning and having fun; includes safety; depends on coaches’ abilities)
- socialization
- mental health and well being

- self-esteem

The benefits identified most often as “nice to have” are:

- courage (identified as “nice to have” in 67% of responses)
- excellence (identified as “nice to have” in 63% of responses)
- challenge (identified as “nice to have” in 61% of responses).

A number of related themes emerged from the consultations. In several of the discussions across the country it was pointed out that the benefits resulting from sport varied greatly according to the level of the sport being played, from “playground to podium.” It was noted, for example, that “fun” and “commitment” mean different things to a tyke soccer player than to an Olympic hurdler. In all cases, it was felt that the sport and level chosen must be by individual choice.

Participants pointed out that fun and fair play are integral to many of the benefits of sport. If a child is having fun, then
commitment, striving for excellence, health and many other benefits accrue naturally. Fair play tends to be a combination of fun, respect and belonging. The role of the coaches and the parents were noted as key influencing factors to a number of benefits, including honesty.

Although teamwork reaches underlying values, including respect and honesty, it should be recognized that it is not necessarily a part of all sports (e.g. long-distance running).

Participants pointed out that many of the benefits need to be better defined to allow for fully informed discussion. For example, does health and well being include both physical and mental health? What is meant by excellence – personal best, top ranking or some other measure? Does fair play include respect and honesty, or are these separate benefits?

**Benefits to the Community**

The benefits that sport provides to the community were far less clear to participants. Most benefits suggested to participants received mixed votes as “need” or “nice” to have. “Healthier society” emerged as the only benefit that was clearly a “need to have.”

The only new community benefit suggested at three or more meetings was “economic benefits,” which was felt by two-thirds of those who voted on this benefit as a “nice to have.” This figure may be skewed by the fact that about one-third of the votes in this category were cast in the Toronto session, where almost everyone felt the economic benefits were “nice to have.” In all other sessions, there was an even split between those who thought this benefit was “need” or “nice” to have.

During discussion, participants fully supported the view that the focus in sport should be on the individual, and the community will enjoy the “spin off” benefits that result. They noted that community and school sports are distinct. They are currently not well, if at all linked, with ongoing problems including the sharing of facilities, scheduling of sports, etc.

There was discussion over whether benefits, such as a decrease in crime, may be more noticeable in smaller communities. Some noted, however, that very successful sports programs have focused on improving inner-city neighbourhoods in large centres. It was pointed out at one of the sessions that if violence in sport is tolerated, children can transfer this lesson to other aspects of their lives.
Expectations versus Experience in Community Sport

Participants were asked to identify the gaps of most concern between the potential benefits and the reality of sport in their community. The gaps noted most often between expectations versus experience concerned:

- fair play, respect and honesty (identified by all five groups)
- fun (five groups)
- resources (four groups)
- coaching (four groups)

Other gaps raised in more than one group concerned skill development, volunteer/leadership development and health and well-being. There was also discussion in at least three sessions regarding a lack of understanding around the purpose of sport in general (including sport as a life-long activity) and the objectives of individual sports.

Discussion around these gaps included the following:

Fair play and respect – Although there is much discussion about fair play, it is not always put into practice. There is an apparent disconnect between the values espoused by sports organizations, officials and parents, and those tolerated. This results in the acceptance of “situational” ethics, the loss of integrity for the individual, and the lack of safe and welcoming environments for sport – all resulting in sport not living up to its potential in the community.

There continues to be excessive focus on the outcome (winning) as opposed to the process. A key reason for this appears to be the lack of communication and buy-in from parents and youth, and few skills in implementing fair play among coaches and administration. Codes of conduct are established but rarely truly adopted by the sport administration and community organizations. In addition, there seems to be little opportunity to adapt codes to the specific needs and skill level of participants. Involving all participants (players, coaches, parents, administrators) in establishing and enforcing fair play approaches is key to success.

Fun – This emphasis is sometimes missing from community sport. Factors that result in a lack of fun include:

- Too much emphasis on excelling and individual stars.
- Parents’ attitudes range from not being supportive enough (using sport as a baby-sitting service) to being overly involved and demanding.
- Community size can limit opportunities for recreational and competitive teams, sometimes forcing children into a level unsuited to their skills and desires (too competitive, or not competitive enough).
- For children living in rural areas, the time consumed driving to sports can lessen the fun.
- Gender issues can impact the level of fun. For example, all-female teams often increase the amount of enjoyment girls
have, but are not always available to them.

- School sport is important to teach children the skills they need to fully participate – it is no fun if you do not know how to properly play the sport.

A key element that appears missing from adult thinking in organizing sport for children is the rights of the children themselves.

**Resources** (including community capacity) – Lack of money, people (coaches, administrators, volunteers, officials, etc.) and infrastructure were cited as key challenges in meeting the expectations of sport, with participants noting that the economic issue affects all the other issues, including the ability of many to participate at all.

The cost of equipment and travel can translate into access barriers. Participants pointed to the large number of people who do not participate in sport at all, and the fact that few resources exist to draw them in – efforts are devoted to the converted, rather than others who could also benefit from community sport.

The aging population is also having an impact on attracting volunteers to sport. As their children grow up, most people tend to withdraw from community sport.

Communities often lack new infrastructure and the ability to maintain existing facilities. The result is less access and opportunities for individuals and loss of spin-off benefits to the community. Government leadership and funding are critical; however participants also pointed out that organizations can become dependent on government support and not seek funding from other sources. Reduced programming in schools, which used to reach all children, exacerbates access issues. Many participants saw schools as the most important “lost opportunity” for delivering the benefits of values-based sport experiences to youth.

**Coaching / leadership** – Of all the stakeholders involved in community sport, coaches are one of the most influential and most in need of attention. Coaching skills across the board can be very uneven with gaps for coaches and leaders including:

- training on skills, values, and healthy child development and skill development
- the funds to provide training
- awareness of the continuum of development of sports ability
- awareness of issues regarding age, gender and discrimination
- lack of a defined role for coaches.

Coaching is driven from the top down, which results in an approach that is too serious and limits the number of coaches. There are too few trainers for coaches, making it difficult to provide them with the knowledge they need. In addition, many coaches are relatively inexperienced.

There are gaps in leadership at the national and provincial levels, which result in a cyclical leadership void. The lack of leadership results in fewer funds available to develop new leaders. Leadership is required
to fight discrimination, to advocate for facilities and funding, and to attract and manage quality coaches and volunteers. Effective human resource policies and training are required for that management function, which should include appropriate means for dismissing or re-directing people who are not effective in their volunteer positions.

Again, reduced school programs are implicated, as that has resulted in fewer leaders and trained coaches being developed.

**Skill development** – The focus on games reduces the amount of effort put into skill development. The ratio of practices to games should be three practices for each game, but the reality is usually the reverse. Skill development is essential in the early years in school (kindergarten – grade 7), pointing again to the importance of school sports.

A related issue is an over-emphasis on one sport to the exclusion of others. Participants supported “seasons of play,” which refers to the opportunity for children to participate in different sports at different times in the year, develop skills and a love for a variety of sports. Difficulties arise at the higher levels of play, where a club may require players to commit to playing and training at that one sport throughout the year. This forces children to make choices before their bodies and interests are fully developed, and may leave them at a disadvantage if they want to switch sports at some point.

Part of the pressure to maintain children in one sport year-round is the funding formula whereby sports are funded according to the number of children playing. Year-round sports result in more funding. Coaches do not always recognize the value of cross training, and in their quest for funding, do not support “seasons of play.”

**Health and well-being** – Sport leads to long-term health benefits, yet only 30 – 40% of the population is participating in sport. Children must be provided the opportunity to try a variety of sports and develop skills where their interests lie. Without this foundation, they may not see these benefits and will not develop the life long commitment to sport and the positive health benefits that ensue.

**CHALLENGES TO MEETING EXPECTATIONS**

Challenges suggested to participants were presented as “barriers to participation”, “poor quality of the sport experience” and “lack of political will”. Across all suggestions, the key challenges identified are:

- coaching issues (ranked as important in 100% of responses)
- lack of volunteer recruitment, retention and inadequate training (100% of responses)
- inappropriate parental involvement or attitudes (100% of responses)
- inadequate organization or ineffective voice from the sport community (100% of responses)
- reduced public and school programs (94% of responses)
- inadequate government leadership (94% of responses)
- sport leadership issues (84% of responses)
- economics/cost (84% of responses)
- geographic location (79% of responses)

It is interesting to note that although in most of the sessions, groups were addressing the challenges to a specific gap between the expectations and the reality of community sport, there was unanimity on one key issue, and near-unanimity on a further five.

Human resource issues were consistently ranked at the top of the scale, whether they dealt with coaches, volunteers, parents or community sport leaders. Leadership development was raised as a lynchpin to many community sport issues: leaders are required to attract good coaches, and to manage volunteer and parent issues. A strong role was seen for government in supporting and building leadership. The important role of the coach was also emphasized, as the one individual who will most likely influence a child in their pursuit of sport. Effective training of coaches is key to ensuring this relationship is healthy and built on a strong ethical foundation.

The importance of school programs emerged across the country, with particular concern about the void being left as they are consistently being cut back. It was noted that the role that schools have traditionally played in skill development and training of coaches and leaders is increasingly being eroded. The role of government was again highlighted, in that inadequate government leadership results in policies not being implemented from the provincial level down in education.

Although economics/cost was not ranked as important as some of the other issues, participants noted that resources determine access and programming, which affects
organizations’ abilities to meet the diverse needs of their communities.

For some participants, a number of factors were not seen as posing barriers to participation. They are:

- use of performance-enhancing drugs (not ranked as an issue in 14% of responses)
- injuries (not ranked in 14% of responses)
- social class (not ranked in 11% of responses)
- lack of opportunities for unstructured, unsupervised participation (not ranked in 11% of responses).

In discussion, participants noted that although there are still some barriers, issues like age, gender and discrimination are being dealt with through existing programs and public education. Others noted, however, that much more work is required. For example, many fewer girls participate in organized sport than boys.

**Review of the Condensed Summary of Paper 1: Realizing the Expectations: Youth, Character, and Community in Canadian Sport by Peter Donnelly, Ph.D. and Bruce Kidd, Ph.D.**

Many of the issues were identified as being important, with some more relevant to grass roots, community-based involvement and others to more high-end competitive programs. Participants identified the most valuable benefits of sport as being fun, respect, fair play, health, and honesty, with the focus on individual benefits. Community benefits were thought to be a natural outcome of individual benefits.

One area of agreement across all consultations was the importance of reducing barriers and challenges to participation. The barriers and challenges identified in the previous exercise point to participants’ concerns with:

- coaching issues
- volunteer recruitment, retention and training
- inappropriate parental involvement or attitudes
- reduced public and school programs
- inadequate organization or ineffective voice from the sport community
- inadequate government leadership
- sport leadership issues
- geographic location
- economics/cost.

Each group identified a number of additional issues or issues requiring more emphasis than evident in the condensed paper including:

- the importance of fun in sport, as the basic reason children engage in sport
- acknowledgement of variations/differences across the country; between communities and situations; between individual and team sports; between community and more competitive (elite) sports; and between children (different needs and wants)
the importance of “community’s ownership of sport, collectively,” and the individual makeup of each community (age, gender, etc.)

human resource issues, with a focus on leadership, and the training and skills of coaches, but also staff and volunteers

parental attitudes, roles and responsibilities

the overemphasis on competition

the role sport plays in building self-esteem in children.

Several threads that ran through other suggestions include:

- the importance of involving all players in community sport in decision-making, including the youth themselves
- the funding of sport, with its emphasis on elite athletes
- the importance of skill development that is level and age specific, to increase enjoyment and participation in sport
- negative outcomes of sport participation and how they can be avoided, and conflict management.
- the importance of the school system in physical education
- the fact that existing solutions are not mentioned.

**Ethics and Values in Community Sport**

Approximately half of the participants in each consultation session addressed the topic of ethics and values in community sport. They reviewed condensed summaries of papers 2A: *Community Sport, Community Choice: The Ethical Challenges of Community Sport* by Robert Butcher, Ph.D. and Angela Schneider, Ph.D. and 2B: *Understanding the Nature of Ethics, Values, and Purposes of Business, Health-Care, and Law: Implications and Applications for Community Sport* by David Cruise Malloy, Ph.D.

**Positive Social Objectives of Community Sport**

Over the course of the consultations, a picture of an individual formed through the benefits of community sport emerged as someone who is well rounded, sociable, well adjusted and empowered. In all groups, the following positive social objectives of community sport emerged:

- team work, including an on-going contribution to sport whereby players return as coaches/volunteers
- leadership, including acting as role models in the community
- fair play, recognizing coaches, volunteers and individual athletes who demonstrate commitment to fair play principles, and ensuring fair play spans from the playground to the podium
- fun
- life skills, including decision-making and time management
- self-esteem
- sense of belonging
respect

discipline and commitment

healthy individuals and society.

The modifications required to achieve these objectives were seen as including efforts to:

- Eliminate star status of some athletes and encourage and support equal participation for all children.
- Reduce focus on the outcome of sport, and increase focus on the process.
- Develop role models through training and support, including parents, coaches, teachers and participants, and recognize these individuals. Mandated certification through the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) was specifically mentioned.
- Provide more opportunities in the schools.
- Develop a support system including transportation, cost of registration and equipment, etc. in the schools and the community.
- Agree on values, and promote and defend them.

Participants felt that positive values and ethical conduct must be incorporated into the sport community, resulting in community buy-in, ownership, and pride. The values and morals incorporated into the sports community were felt to be reflective of the community as a whole, and more specifically the family (“It starts at home”).

A Love of Sport for Its Own Sake

Paper 2A asks whether the primary purpose of community sport is to promote a love of sport for its own sake. After determining whether this should be the primary purpose, participants discussed barriers that exist to prevent achieving this goal.

There was not clear agreement on this question. Sport was noted as being both for its own sake, and for the individual’s sake, with one group noting that sport is not always “good” in and of itself. There was some agreement that the emphasis should centre on personal best as opposed to competition, but at one session it was also noted that the problem was the emphasis on victory and that competition is fine. Barriers and challenges exist in the form of a lack of opportunities and facilities, negative attitudes on the part of parents and coaches, and cultural restrictions.

Main Values of Community Sport

Participants discussed the current main values of community sport. Main values that emerged across all consultations include:

- NOT winning at all cost, but focussing on personal bests and goal setting (striving and personal growth) and winning honourably.
- fair play
- team work
- an emphasis on participation and social interaction (resulting in a sense of belonging)
respect and commitment to oneself, the team and the sport by all participants, including parents.

One group asked whether there must be agreement by the sport community as a whole on core values, or if they should be community-specific. They noted that individual communities, teams and leagues could be asked to apply sport-wide values, but that they would only be truly effective if adopted through a participatory process. Coaches, parents and others would have to be motivated to ensure that values are being applied.

Ethical Conduct – How it Is Taught and the Models Used

Participants were asked how ethical conduct is currently explained, taught, and demonstrated to stakeholders in community sport, and whether established models from other sectors could apply in sport (i.e., codes of conduct, ethical decision-making models, or ethics education).

They determined that ethical conduct is currently explained through various means including:

- codes of conduct, and various methods of communicating them (handbooks, workshops, etc.)
- by example and role models
- through the media (although the media exposes poor ethical conduct, it does not always explain it as such).

More than one group emphasized that the process is not systemic, but ad hoc. They also emphasized that sport values are part of the social fabric of the community and reflect those values.

The best models for explaining ethical conduct include:

- codes of conduct
- Level 1 theory, as part of the National Coaching Certification Program
- role models including parents, coaches and other children
- teaching children fair play and ethical conduct as early as possible in school or through sports clubs
- evaluation and/or ethics “audits.”

There seemed to be agreement that the process of developing and adopting the code of conduct is as important as, if not more important than, the code itself or the model chosen. The key is buy-in by the community. To be effective, codes of conduct must be met with commitment and recognition, and result in consequences for contravention. This means that a top-down process will not work, but all the stakeholders must be part of the discussion and implementation of ethical conduct. The process would have to be part of the fabric of community sport, beginning with the recruitment and training of volunteers and administrators and including program evaluation. Nevertheless, it was also noted that governing bodies must take a leadership role to speed up the adoption process throughout the system. It was also noted that a complete strategy is required in this area, encompassing everything from definitions, training, and leadership models to a national social marketing campaign.
Some participants noted that the examples provided in law, health care and business in the Malloy paper do not apply well to sport.

**Review of the Condensed Summary of Paper 2A: Community Sport, Community Choice: The Ethical Challenges of Community Sport by Robert Butcher, Ph.D. and Angela Schneider, Ph.D.**

Various issues were identified as being important, but the gap between ethical theory and practice was identified in more than one consultation, as was the marginalization of ethics in sport. In other words, what children are taught and what they see around them are often very different. Other ideas that resonated are the concepts presented regarding “moral choices in sport”, and the fact that “because sport is created, it can be changed,” to better meet the needs of various age groups and levels.

Additional or under-emphasized issues that were identified include:

- the concept of personal best (as opposed to winning at all costs); this includes teams recognizing the fact that a loss may be a fair price to pay to ensure that all players can participate equally
- roles and responsibilities of coaches (including relationship with boards of directors) officials, administrators, and recognition of their key roles
- the role of parents, and their motivations behind involving their children in sport which may include living out their own dreams through their children, or striving for scholarship opportunities.

One group noted that the heart of the issue is found in answering the question, “Why is sport the way it is? If it is an instrument of social control, who is entitled to use it? Who controls it? If community sport is just about the love of sport, why are we even talking about how to increase the return of positive values and benefits?”

A number of people raised the fact that issues of implementation were absent from the summary of the paper, including effective communication, fair decisions, the requirement for resources to support the programs offered, and concrete suggestions for applying and managing ethics. Another observation was that the paper focuses on team sports and does not apply to ranked sports.


Although there was much discussion of the points raised in the paper, most groups did not identify a most important issue in this paper.

Additional or under-emphasized issues that were identified include:

- a definition of ethics in sports
- the motivation for adopting codes of conduct in sport, which may be different from other sectors, where
protecting a business or professional reputation may be the prime motivation

- the differences in team versus individual sports
- the difference between the values of professional sport, which is a business motivated by profit, and community sports, where values are inconsistent
- a review of existing models in Canadian sports ethics, such as the Fair Play Program
- comparisons to the education sector, which is most closely aligned to sports.

Again, solutions to implementing sport values were identified as being missing from the summary paper.

**THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA COVERAGE AND PROFESSIONAL SPORT ON COMMUNITY SPORT**

Approximately half of the participants in each consultation addressed the influence of media coverage and professional sport on community sport. They were asked to review condensed summaries of papers 3A: *The Changing Face of Sport: From Hometown Heroes to Supermen and Superwomen* by Stephen Brunt, and 3B: *Watching the Pros vs. Playing the Game: How Sports Coverage Affects Community-Level Athletes* by Romayne Smith Fullerton, Ph.D.

**DOMINANT VALUES AND ROLE MODELS**

Participants reviewed the dominant values and role models typically depicted in media coverage of professional and amateur sport.

**Professional sports**

There was consensus across the consultations that the values portrayed by professional sport are generally negative and include winning at all costs (to the detriment of fair play, accountability and responsibility); the importance of money (both in order to win and as a reward for winning); and acceptance of negative behaviour with a lack of consequences. The focus on the individual, rather than the team, promotes a selfish attitude, and false heroism attributed to those who play while injured is seen as harmful.

On a positive note, the media will highlight professional athletes who have overcome significant barriers to achieve success. The community service performed by professional athletes and athletic organizations, including community foundations, also counters negative values highlighted in the media.

Professional role models can be negative and portray individuals who lack accountability for their actions, such as Dennis Rodman, feeding the media demand for sensationalism. The professional ranks are dominated by male athletes, resulting in more role models for boys and fewer for girls.

However there are also positive role models among professional athletes, including Tiger Woods, Wayne Gretzky, and Martina Navratilova. Professional sport role models can raise the profile of minorities in sport and impart positive values such as hard work.
Amateur sports

Amateur sport does not get the media recognition it deserves, especially compared to the coverage of professional sport. The Olympics are the rare exception, where a focus is put on amateur sport. The values portrayed in the media for amateur sports when they are covered include:

- the rewards for hard work (although often sacrifice and poverty are linked with amateur sport, as wealth is with professional sport)
- overcoming adversity
- community pride.

It was suggested that local sport organizations have a role to play in communicating information to the media to increase/improve coverage.

Amateur role models increase interest in sport and promote community pride, or in the case of the Olympics, national pride. As individuals, or through programs such as the Esteem Team, they provide positive role models for youth.

The media promote professional sport values more than amateur sport values; therefore the values of professional athletes, although a smaller group, have a greater influence than those of amateur athletes. Although professional sport is essentially part of the entertainment business, this distinction is not always clear. Sport is often portrayed as a continuum, from amateur to professional status, and the different values portrayed by these two pursuits are not always clearly differentiated. Confusion results, with the clearly inappropriate moral decisions of some professional athletes influencing youth.

Participants noted that youth are more influenced by media coverage on TV (which they watch) than in newspapers (which they tend not to read).

A COUNTER MESSAGE

With athletic success so often measured in dollars, participants were asked to suggest counter messages that should be communicated to young people, along with effective means for their delivery.

Just as the media frequently conveys negative messages regarding the values of sport, it can also be used to communicate positive ones. Counter messages can highlight positive values of sport such as fun, hard work and the benefits of participating on mind, body and spirit. Suggestions for counter-messages include:

- “Just do it” for the fun and love of sport.
- “Sports for Life.”

Effective delivery mechanisms included using the media to promote the personal success stories of athletes. Taking a page from professional athletics, participants suggested using brand name sponsors to convey positive counter-messages. The Esteem Team was raised again as an effective approach to conveying positive sport messages to youth.

CONCERNS ABOUT CURRENT MEDIA COVERAGE

Participants reviewed whether parents, coaches and other Canadians are concerned
about current media coverage of sport, and if so, what their concerns might be.

Although a certain level of concern was expressed across the country, it was not overwhelming. It was suggested that an increase in local coverage is warranted, and coverage of women and athletes with a disability could be increased. However, participants are very aware of the fact that the primary purpose of the media is business (selling papers), and that they tend to focus on the negative, sensational story, which runs counter to the amateur sport message promoting fun and participation. They noted that coverage of amateur sport is better in the community media than in national media, and in print rather than electronic media.

**Educating Participants About Values**

The question was posed as to whether sports clubs, coaches, officials, parents and participants themselves adequately educate participants about the values of participation, fair play and good sportsmanship in the current media environment. Other methods for promoting values in community sport were probed.

Participants acknowledged that more could be done at the community level. Recognition for participation is not well communicated – attending practice is not recognized to the degree that scoring goals is. However, high school sports tend to reward participation due to the fact they have trained leaders tasked with delivering this focus. Community sport leaders may not have the training that teachers do in this regard. As well, high schools have specific programs that focus on fair play (e.g. Champions Program), whereas these types of programs are largely absent from community sport.

More could be done to promote fair play leagues, codes of conduct, contracts with players, harassment policies and other methods to educate all involved. Current examples were cited; including Speak Out, Team First, Stop Program, and the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association television commercials now on the air.

*Working with the media was another approach identified. Participants noted that the media should not be unattached observers of sport, but that they have a responsibility to reflect the values of the community and to be involved as one of the agents of change.*


The over-riding issue that emerged as important in this paper deals with imbalance of attention on professional sport and its role as entertainment. Its focus on money rather than the game itself was felt to be a key differentiator between professional and amateur sport.

Participants felt that the summary of the paper did not address the seamless continuum of “high performance” amateur to professional sport, pointing out that it tries to separate them into two separate entities (one sport and one entertainment) when they are both a part of the same sport system. The differences between the
The Olympics and professional sport are blurred, with both strongly focused on money and winning.

Another issue that was identified as missing from the summary paper is the value of the health benefits from being active, both to individuals and the community.

The role and responsibility of the media was also felt to need more emphasis, with a question raised regarding the media’s obligation to provide balance. Participants noted the pervasive inter-relationships between large media conglomerates and professional sport – business relationships that make balance impossible, due to the media’s vested interest in professional sport.


The lack of diversity in coverage was a theme in the identification of the most important issues, with participants noting that media sport coverage is male dominated, and lacks adequate coverage of women and athletes with a disability.

As far as additional or under-emphasized issues, participants noted that most of the blame for lack of local or amateur coverage falls on the media; however, those involved in amateur sport (coaches, parents, administrators) also have a responsibility to communicate information about their events and athletes. Some also pointed out that there is too much emphasis on what the media has to say, without fully analyzing the influence they have. It was noted that more focus should be put on leadership development, so that those who have direct contact with athletes are in a better position to counter the negative messages of sport in the media.

As far as the coverage presented, some participants questioned some of the conclusions in the content analysis, noting that the wide coverage provided to wire service articles distorts the number of actual stories written.

Several participants from both Toronto and Winnipeg felt that there were no issues missing from this summary paper.


Two issues came up most frequently as the most important ones identified in the consultations: fair play and evaluation (or “setting a bar”) to determine whether progress is being made. Another key issue is the fact that many different models and approaches can be successful, and each community must arrive at and promote its own solutions. The important role of coaches, their skills and leadership qualities, was also raised.

Additional or under-emphasized issues include the overall importance of youth involvement in the process. Participants felt the examples were somewhat narrow in that they did not address sports for individuals, or refer in any detail to gender or disability issues, or include programs directed to coaches. It was also pointed out that two of the examples focussed specifically on ethics.
in sport, and that two were more concerned with the resulting benefits to society. It was felt that hockey was over represented. The number of evaluated examples was limited and did not address any currently in place in schools.

Some suggested that specific examples of programs are less helpful than best practices that can be applied and modified according to community needs. The importance of locally developed values and vision for community sport and buy-in from all those involved, including the athletes themselves, was felt to be missing. How to introduce and get support for programs, including identifying the problem that is being resolved, was not emphasized enough, given how difficult this is to accomplish. The issues of the financial resources and liability coverage required to implement programs like the examples cited were also seen as requiring attention. As well, several deficiencies and possible negative results from the described programs were highlighted.

A number of participants provided suggestions for other programs that could have been highlighted.

Summary of Key Themes

A number of issues came up at almost all the consultations. They are summarized below.

Definitions – Clear definitions are lacking for many of the terms in the discussion, including life skills, fair play, commitment, excellence, athlete and sport ethics. As well, allowances should be made in all discussions for differentiations, including between sport levels, between sport types (e.g., team versus individual or ranked sport), and between communities, groups (age, gender, etc.) and circumstances.

Fun – Participants in all consultations noted the importance of fun, and the lack of focus on fun in the issue papers. Whatever the level of play a child is at, a positive sports experience is the most important goal.

Schools – A big gap was identified across the country around the role schools could be playing in sport and skill development for children. It was noted that schools are the best place to reach children (they have a captive audience) and this is not being taken advantage of. Reduced sport programming in schools is resulting in fewer children participating and developing skills and fewer leaders being developed. Schools and community sport operate separately, and could be linked far more closely to benefit participants and the community.

Individual versus community benefits – Sport should remain focused on the individual and the ensuing benefits (health, life skills and values) will trickle down and improve the community as a whole.

Parents – The role of parents is very important in community youth sport. Parents need to strike a balance between being supportive and involved, and not pushing too hard. Parents’ actions are also influential as important role models for children.

Coaches – Coaches play a pivotal role in community sport and their importance is not adequately addressed. Coaches must
understand the basics of fair play, skill development, the idea of sport for fun, and the importance of their role and impact. There is a need for higher requirements and accountability in leadership and certification of coaches. Coaches also deserve respect and recognition.

Other issues around coaching that require further exploration both in theory and in practice include coach management: firing or reassigning coaches; deciding if the best coaches should be with the higher level athletes (where they currently tend to be) when they may be more effective at the developing levels.

The participants — Although the participants themselves (the youth) are obviously the focus of discussions, they are often not invited to the table. Young people need to be involved in every aspect of the sporting community, beginning with the opportunity to choose the sport and the level they would like to participate in. Youth should also be involved in decisions around ethical frameworks, including their development and adoption. Youth representation is essential at the Symposium.

Values — The personal best concept needs to be further explored and emphasized. This incorporates personal growth and goal setting. The idea of winning at all costs is still pervasive and this approach must be adjusted to focus on the process of participating and all that entails — fair play, equal participation, teamwork, etc. There is consensus across the country that fair play is one of the most important values sport can instil in children.

Sport is one of the remaining areas where the win / lose concept is still prevalent and there is the opportunity to learn how to deal with both outcomes. Children are not exposed to the associated learnings of this concept in many other areas of their lives, particularly with concerns about political correctness and young people’s self-esteem.

Media — The media have a distance go in providing balanced coverage (including professional versus amateur, male versus female, and able versus disabled) that portrays positive social values. Although the values portrayed by the media in amateur coverage are far more positive than those depicted in professional coverage, the bulk of coverage focuses on professional sport. Those involved in community sport have a responsibility to connect with the media to relay information and to convince them of the benefits of modifying and expanding their coverage. Youth spend more time watching TV than reading newspapers, making TV the medium of most influence on them.

Resources — Resources were cited as a major challenge or barrier across the country. For individuals a lack of money results in the inability to participate. At the broader level, resources include human resources, infrastructure and dollars. In some cases there is no infrastructure and facilities cannot be maintained. Due to a lack of funds and lack of time, also a major barrier, there are too few human resources (coaches, administrators, staff, volunteers etc.) to carry out the work that needs to be done.
The Symposium We Want

Participants were asked to provide input for shaping The Sport We Want Symposium being held in Ottawa on September 12 and 13, 2003. Their input focuses on who should be invited, and program suggestions.

Who Should Attend

Many of the participants in the consultation were sport administrators, whether in a paid or volunteer capacity, often with the additional “hats” of coach, official and/or parent. They noted that a truly representative consultation should also include:

- youth, in a model that recognizes that a different approach may be needed in consulting them, but that involving them empowers them to be active participants (allowing for a separate, but parallel process for youth that comes together with others at various points in the day)
- parents and parent groups (as above, with opportunities for discussion as a small group, and as part of the plenary)
- community representatives
- national decision makers
- the education sector
- the voluntary sector
- representatives from non-organized sport and non-competitive levels
- the media.

They also noted that participants should be representative of Canada, both regionally and from an ethno-cultural perspective. Recognizing the financial constraints of the Symposium, the suggestion was made that participation be broadened, by allowing people to finance their own attendance.

Program Suggestions

Participants were clear on the basic approach to the Symposium, that it should recap the ideas presented at the regional consultations, but go beyond that towards resolving the issues. People feel the issues are well defined, and what is needed is action. Continued dialogue, with no concrete action was seen as a step backwards in the process of creating “The Sport We Want.” They support a short, focussed agenda, addressing a few key issues well.

Specific suggestions for attention at the Symposium are:

Define the problem – Ensure it is defined in a way that engages Canadians. Broaden the dialogue beyond “by sport for sport.” Position sport as an investment in a better country and quality of life.

Communications is key – Devote attention to discussing a process to improve communications on the issue to all key players – participants, administrators, coaches and parents.

Identify key initiatives to pilot – A few successful approaches should be identified to pilot and measure outcomes. Build on successes and make adjustments where required.
Focus on the role of schools – As a key player in introducing and shaping sports among youth, schools need to be central to all discussions, and education decision-makers party to any decisions.

Focus on coaches – Recognize and build on the professionalism of the sport community, including coaches who have the required education and training.

Consider a marketing program – The key outcomes (see below) should be promoted through a communications and marketing strategy.

Continue the dialogue – develop an interactive web site for further communications among participants and other interested parties.

Suggested outcomes of the Symposium are:

- A vision statement to be adopted by all regarding the role of community sport.
- Broad guiding principles and conditions that will be respected by all, but will be flexible enough to allow for local ownership.
- Recognition by national and provincial sport organizations of the obligations of community sport.