

Tuesday June 5, 2018

## **Toward an Abuse-Free Environment in Sport**

Montréal (Québec) - The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) supports initiatives to ensure Canadian youth are protected and can expect a safe sport experience, free from mental, emotional and physical abuse. A universal approach that is well understood by athletes, coaches, support personnel, sport administrators and parents is the way forward to prevent abuse in sport.

The SDRCC is prepared to work with interested collaborators such as B2ten, the Coaching Association of Canada, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, Respect in Sport and government to implement policies and procedures to hold sport organizations accountable to a high standard when it comes to protecting sport participants.

“We applaud the courage of the victims who came forward seeking to bring positive change for future generations of young athletes. We support the new momentum created by yesterday’s revelations”, declared David de Vlieger, Chair of the Board of Directors of the SDRCC. “The SDRCC is a logical partner to help the sport system establish workable solutions, which we hope will lead to the launch of a sport ombuds office in Canada. Safety should be a universal expectation for Canada’s young athletes.”

The SDRCC was established following the publication of the *Win-Win* report to the federal government in 2000. That report noted “an urgent need for policy reform within the amateur sport community in Canada. Due to a lack of fair and consistent policies, or to the improper administration of those policies, athletes and other participants in sport are being disciplined, harassed and denied opportunities without proper recourse to a hearing or appeal. Sometimes, even with policies in place and properly administered, the participants to a dispute need recourse to an impartial, third party”. Since its inception in 2004, the SDRCC has been a neutral, nimble and knowledgeable resource to resolve disputes in the Canadian sport system pertaining mostly to team selection, athlete funding, doping and disciplinary matters.

A cornerstone service of the SDRCC is its well-respected roster of 50 trained mediators and arbitrators who are able, often with little time, to resolve difficult and often stressful situations that arise in sport. Close to half of them also have expertise in investigating and adjudicating harassment cases in other contexts. The SDRCC also focusses on the prevention of disputes by promoting good governance and encouraging fairness across all sports, from the field of play to the boardroom. In doing so, it has established itself as a natural and independent avenue for parties to raise concerns when issues arise and to provide appropriate incident management for non-criminal but yet unacceptable behavior.

In April of 2017, the SDRCC released a report recommending the creation of an ombuds program for sport in Canada. The conclusions and recommendations were informed by a year-long sport community consultation which included a nationwide online survey, focus groups and several targeted discussions with key stakeholders. The full report is available in both official languages on the home page of the SDRCC website at [www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca](http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca). The SDRCC looks forward to working together with interested stakeholders to make Canadian sport a safer place.

### **About the SDRCC**

The SDRCC is a not-for-profit corporation created by federal legislation and funded by the Government of Canada. The mission of the SDRCC is to provide the sport community with a national alternative dispute resolution service and strengthen the culture of fairness in Canadian sport by resolving disputes quickly and efficiently and to provide expertise and assistance regarding alternative dispute resolution.

For more information, please contact:

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