



# Guide to Administrative Fair Play

Explored, Expanded & Explained

Are we  
playing fair too?



CRDSC SDRCC  
Centre de Règlement des Différends Sportifs du Canada  
Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada





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# 1

The concept of Fair Play in sport is well understood—people on the field of competition need to be playing by the same rules if fairness is to be achieved.

**In an effort to remain open, transparent and accountable, have we provided our member community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others), *in advance and in clear, plain language*, with all documents, policies, rules and regulations that apply to them?**

The purpose of answering, “yes” to this question, should be clear: Fair Play cannot exist in an environment where information is not shared openly and fully explained. If a sport organization’s member/participants do not know and understand the *policies, rules, procedures and criteria*\* that they are expected to play by, they are unable to fully participate. Should they attempt to “play” without full knowledge, they will be operating without critical information, which, had they been aware of it, might have led to different behavior. Similarly,

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\* See related explanations on page 61.

when a sport organization introduces a new policy (e.g., one that affects athlete selection criteria) and does not apprise its members of the change in a timely manner, explaining how the change affects them, individuals may have trouble focusing on their sport. Sport organizations often publish new policies each year and assume that those changes will be easily adopted and that there will be a seamless transition from the old to the new. In practice, however, people are generally resistant to change. We become accustomed to a set of rules and policies and are comfortable with the status quo. Change can create misunderstanding and confusion, which can then lead to conflict. Conflict and confusion can subsequently interfere with the important task of developing winning teams and athletes.

**Example:** A coach tells an athlete that a certain competition is necessary for selection to a team. The competition has been required for years. But next year, it's to be replaced by a different mandatory competition. The coach realizes his mistake too late for the athlete to enter the new mandatory competition. The athlete is angry with the coach but also at the sport organization for changing the rule, and

argues that the rule changes were not made public early enough for her to prepare her training program, and now she's missed the closing date for the new mandatory and now oversubscribed competition. The result is: The athlete doesn't get to compete and becomes ineligible for team selection and team's composition is now compromised.

This scenario might have been avoided if a sport organization's rules and changes to rules are published early and in as many mediums as possible--On a sport organization's website, by email, by post, by conducting meetings for its member community. To assist with following Guideline 1, a sport organization needs to ask:

- A.** Do we make sure that all members of our community have access to current rules, either on the Web or by hard copy?
- B.** Do we make sure the rules published on the Web are easy to find and up-to-date?
- C.** Have we done all we can to make our rules clear and understandable?
  1. Do we provide a telephone help line for questions where calls are returned within 24 hours?

2. Do we have an easily navigable website with a link for Frequently Asked Questions?
  3. Do we offer a mentor program for members to help them understand the rules that apply to them?
- D.** Do we let our members know about changes to the rules before or as they occur so that members are informed and can act on those changes?
- E.** Do we conduct membership meetings on a regular basis, either in person, teleconference or by webinar where members can ask questions about the rules and regulations?
- F.** Do we publicize these meetings and inform our members that they will be responsible for knowing the information presented?
- G.** Do we send out email notifications of rule changes and follow up on undeliverable emails?
- H.** Do we accept criticism for rules that are unclear and publish clarifications, while working to make adjustments that improve the situation?

- I. Are there inconsistencies in our rules and policies, which we need to correct?
- J. Do our rules make clear to our member athletes what is required for selection to a team and do they understand what will occur if the requirement criteria are not met?
- K. Do our member athletes, coaches and officials understand what is at stake if they violate rules and the penalties that might be imposed should they, for example, breach their code of conduct?
- L. Do our members understand the breadth of what might be considered “unsportsmanlike behavior” including inappropriate comments made on social networking and other websites?
- M. Have we informed our member coaches about what is required for their selection and the appropriate behavior expected of them, as well as what will occur if there is a violation? (Example: When a coach is accused of sexual harassment by an athlete, the coach will be automatically suspended until a timely internal investigation can be held.)





# 2

*The Guide to Administrative Fair Play* takes the idea of fair play on the field and expands it into a workable set of guidelines that can be applied to all individuals in and around a given sport—whether they are athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, administrators or others.

**Have we attempted to avoid conflict by encouraging all the members of our community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others) to be accountable with respect to reading and understanding all relevant documents and policies, and to stay abreast of changes, speaking up *immediately* if policies are unclear, incomplete or flawed?**

The purpose of encouraging accountability is to reduce the possibility of future conflict. When our members know and understand the rules on an ongoing basis, they cannot easily defend the position that they didn't know a certain rule applied to them. In addition, by requiring members to speak up if there is confusion about a rule or a set of criteria, they are given the opportunity to address the issue—to find out what the intent and meaning of that rule is, which can then cause

the sport organization in question to issue a clarification. Participants in sport need to be made aware that they are expected to participate in a manner that adheres to the highest ethical principles. Holding participants responsible and accountable for knowing the policies, rules, procedures and criteria\* and for their actions will go a long way toward creating an ethical member community comprised of individuals who have a stake in how their sport is viewed both within and without their sport organization.

Additional items that might assist with Guideline 2 and encourage accountability in members are:

- A. Do we require releases or “acceptance of terms” documents on a yearly basis or as our rules change, from each of our member communities (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others) indicating they understand and will abide by the rules that apply to them?
  - i. How do we obtain these releases so as to maximize member accountability?
  - ii. What will we do if we do not receive them?

- iii. Is there an automatic opt-in clause in membership documents such that members need to go out of their way to indicate they will not accept the terms?
  - iv. Do we give our members sufficient time with the documents prior to signing so they can fully understand them?
- B.** Have we sufficiently publicized our mandate for the importance of all our members (from athletes to administrators) knowing and understanding the rules that apply to them and that the purpose of the mandate is to avoid misunderstandings that can lead to future conflict?
- C.** Do we ask for a representative from each set of members (i.e., athletes, coaches, officials, etc.) to assist with making sure those members understand the policies, rules, procedures and criteria\* that affect them, that they've been given the opportunity to comment on any policy or rule that is confusing or flawed, and that they've been informed about their accountability?

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\* See related explanations on page 61.

# 3

Athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, administrators and others comprise a given sport's member community.

All need to feel they are stakeholders in their sport organization's mission of athletic success if Fair Play is to be achieved.

**Have we made it clear to our member community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others) *in advance*, what our decision-making powers are and what criteria we will use to make decisions *in plain, easily understandable language*?**

A sport organization governs over its sport and has the authority to make many decisions that affect its member community. Along with that power comes a responsibility of keeping members informed, in the spirit of Fair Play, of how those decisions will be made. Generally, the more open and transparent a sport organization is with respect to how it makes decisions, and the criteria used to make them, the more the members of the sport organization's community will feel their interests are being acknowledged and attended to. Some of the areas in which a sport organization's

decisions can lead to conflict are selection, carding and disciplinary actions. Decisions about these matters are by their very nature, emotionally charged. But when people are made aware and accountable for knowing how decisions get made, in advance, and decisions in actuality are made using the criteria set forth in the policies, rules, procedures and criteria\*, then they are less likely to attack the sport organization for making a bad decision. The simple reason for this is transparency, openness and a sense of fair play. As informed members of a sport organization, people will feel more involved and less likely to lodge complaints about decisions made in accordance with criteria the members know, understand and accept.

Specifically, some of the questions a sport organization might ask itself in following Guideline 3 are:

- A. Does the sport organization's member community understand and accept that their sport organization has the authority to make decisions that affect its members?

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\* See related explanations on page 61.

- B.** Have we informed our athletes, their coaches and administrators about what is required for selection and do they understand and accept it? For more on team selection, see: <http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/team-selection.jsp>
- C.** Do athletes understand what they need to do to receive a carding recommendation from their sport organization? Is clear, comprehensive carding criteria published sufficiently in advance? For more on carding, see: <http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/carding.jsp>
- D.** Do athletes understand that even if their sport organization gives them a carding recommendation, Sport Canada reserves the right to object to that recommendation if an athlete is deemed not to be in compliance with the agreed upon criteria? Do athletes understand that if they are adversely affected by such decisions, they may lodge an appeal?

- E. Do coaches and officials know the bounds of responsible and acceptable behavior?
- F. Do coaches understand the criteria by which they will be selected and the criteria by which their athletes will be selected?
- G. Are officials, administrators, volunteers and others in the member community aware of the decisions a sport organization can make that will affect them?

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# 4

For *Fair Play* to occur, regardless of whether one is an athlete, coach, volunteer, official, administrator or any other individual on or off the field of play, each person is contributing to the success of that athletic endeavor and should be treated with fairness and respect.

**Have we tried to ensure that the members of our sport community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others) realize the limits of acceptable behavior and the penalties that may be applied for violation?**

Sport has a way of bringing out some of the best and some of the worst in people. All athletes and their coaches want to win. Sport organizations should make as clear as possible, the many ways the boundaries of acceptable behavior might be crossed. Officials need to call events fairly, as they see them, and labor to apply the policies, rules, procedures and criteria\* equally to both sides. Most of the time, no problems arise. But of course, on occasion, an athlete, coach, official, volunteer or administrator does something that crosses the line between tolerable and intolerable behavior and actions must be taken

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\* See related explanations on page 61.

by the sport organization involved, if not by a higher authority.

**Example:** If a group of athletes were accused of getting a teammate drunk, would they be suspended from the team? If that alone were the accusation, probably not. But what if the drinking was forced upon a rookie teammate, against his will, and in a degradingly public manner which ended in his death from alcohol poisoning? Using this second scenario, a sport organization would probably be within its bounds to suspend the athletes involved pending investigation, and, because the hazing incident resulted in a death, an outside authority would get involved as well.

It is vital that a sport organization educates the member community about the boundaries of acceptable conduct, which might jeopardize participation in sport, in advance of an incident occurring. By doing so, a sport organization is conducting itself in an open, transparent manner in accordance with the rules of Fair Play.

Additional questions a sport organization should ask itself as it explores the boundaries

of acceptable member behavior and the manner in which the sport organization educates its member community about the issue:

- A.** Have we informed our members about what will happen to them if they violate anti-doping rules, regardless of how little of a banned substance was found in their bodies, or whether they did so unknowingly? For more on doping-related disputes, see: <http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/doping.jsp>
- B.** Have we informed our member community of the need for discretion with respect to emails and Internet communications, which might be misinterpreted and lead to conflict? Have we developed a policy regarding inappropriate use of the Internet and how those members who conduct unacceptable Internet communications will be treated?
- C.** Have we consulted with the Canadian Center For Ethics in Sport ([www.cces.ca](http://www.cces.ca)), to utilize available tools for educating our members about ethical issues that apply to them?

- D. Do our members understand the disciplinary procedures that will be taken and penalties that will be applied by the sport organization if they are charged with, or found guilty of a violation of the rules? For more on disciplinary matters see: <http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/discipline.jsp>
- E. Have we, the sport organization followed our own disciplinary procedures and applied the sanctions we both have a right to, and would be expected based upon our policies, rules, procedures and criteria?
- F. Have we informed our members of what the repercussions might be should they face criminal charges or be charged with other serious offences? What if they are found guilty?
- G. Do our members understand that they are responsible for knowing, understanding and accepting the sport organization's policies regarding the bounds of proper behavior?



# 5

A sport organization needs to be transparent, its intentions clear and without hidden motivations and methods.

Transparency is a key element of *Fair Play*.

**When we make decisions that affect the members of our sport community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others), have we used plain language in rendering them and in citing what criteria we used to make them? Have we published our decisions in a timely manner?**

Issuing a decision, without providing the reasoning used to make it is usually unsatisfying if not completely frustrating for those who are adversely affected by that decision. It may also be highly unethical (see [www.cces.ca](http://www.cces.ca)). Members need to be informed about how decisions get made (See Guideline 3 above). Then they need to be made aware of the stated criteria used when a decision is actually made. When both these policies are followed, those affected are more likely to feel that their interests have been met. *The transparency with which decisions are made is important for*

*Fair Play to occur across a sport organization's member community.* When a sport organization makes decisions without openness and transparency, confusion and frustration can occur. This can be with regard to a decision about athlete selection, termination of a coaching contract and in many other areas.

**Example:** An official is charged with violating a code of conduct provision stated in the rules but he is not informed of the charge. Instead, he is summoned to appear at a hearing, or before an appeal panel, without knowing any of the particulars about why he's being asked to appear. He might have some idea of the charge but he might also be learning of the charge for the first time at the hearing. When questioned about why the official's sport organization hadn't told him what he was being charged with or by whom, the spokesperson for the sport organization replied, "If the official were informed ahead of time, he would have time to prepare."

Though there could be a safety concern in some situations (e.g., sexual harassment), which might warrant the accused not having all the

information ahead of time, generally speaking, natural justice dictates that individuals have the right to know the charges leveled against them. Keeping the member concerned “in the dark” shows a remarkable disdain for openness and transparency.

Additional questions a sport organization might think about in making and informing the member community about the decisions it makes:

- A.** Do we immediately inform members of our decisions?
  - i. Do we make our selection decisions on stated criteria?
  - ii. Do we let members know right away when a charge is made against them? Or, if there is an overriding reason for a member not to be fully informed, have we provided, within our rules and policies, the reasons for less openness?
  
- B.** Do we let our member community know the bases on which decisions have been made and are those bases stated in our policies?





# 6

*Fair Play* is a concept of fairness and transparency. It is something to strive for—just like winning.

**Have we used best efforts to render unbiased decisions regarding the members of our sport community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others) and worked to ensure that no conflict of interest is present, nor even *appears* to be present, with respect to decisions and decision-makers?**

A given sporting community is small. Most people know each other or at least know *of* each other. As a result, it can be difficult to maintain the appearance of being unbiased. When decisions are made regarding selection, for example, there would be the appearance of bias if one of the selectors voted to include his or her daughter on the Olympic Curling squad, even if she were highly qualified. Because most sport communities are insular, it is therefore even more important that criteria for selection, carding or any other decision rendered on a matter that can affect members adversely, be public and that all

decisions rendered are made on stated and defined criteria\*. It is also important that a sport organization examine the composition of any of its decision-making bodies before rendering decisions, to assess the possibility of controversy arising, and to make adjustments if possible. In considering whether a sport organization can improve its unbiased decision-making, it might ask:

- A. Are our decision-makers aware of what may constitute a real or perceived conflict of interest and how to properly deal with it?
- B. Should we require our decision-makers to excuse themselves from voting on matters where there appears to be a conflict of interest?
- C. Do we avoid the issue of bias in our decision-makers by conducting all business on the basis of objective criteria\*? Are wholly objective criteria\* even possible?
- D. Can we address the concern about bias by having decision-makers appear before an internal (to the sport organization) panel to testify about their lack of bias prior to rendering decisions, and

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\* See related explanations on page 61.

by imposing stated penalties (expulsion) for evidence of bias after the fact?

- E. Have we ensured the decision-making criteria are not arbitrary?
- F. Have we ensured that our selection policies are not inherently unfair by creating systematic exclusion of certain athletes on the basis of discretionary criteria unrelated to performance?
- G. Do we ensure that policy changes do not cause adverse retroactive effects on our members?
- H. Is there a mechanism in place to explain to those not selected why they were not? Is there a way for them to find out where they need to improve as well as how they can?
- I. Have we provided a forum where we have publicized our effort to develop fair criteria?
- J. Can we find a way to solicit member input in developing decision-making criteria, which is reasonable to implement and reached by consensus, in hopes of reducing conflict?

# 7

Searching for, finding and utilizing ways to constructively resolve conflict in a sport community should continue to be a goal of any sport organization.

**Have we provided to the members of our sport community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others), an internal mechanism for protest and/or appeal of decisions we've made? And have we, in plain language, made it clear what steps must be taken in order to lodge a protest/appeal?**

A sport organization needs to provide a clearly defined internal process for allowing members to lodge complaints for organization decisions. Educating a sport organization's member community about natural justice is key to its success. *The right to be heard in a dispute as well as the right to be judged with complete objectivity and impartiality are two fundamental principles of natural justice.*

Education may not, however, be one hundred percent effective. There will be situations where a sport organization has made demonstrable,

well-intentioned efforts to make sure its members are informed of all policies, rules, procedures and criteria\* and still a member comes forward with an appeal or protest. A stated goal of the sport organization should be to go beyond the mere publication of policies, rules, procedures and criteria\* to foster understanding and knowledge of them.

An internal appeal policy spells out the principles and procedures to be followed when a member of a sport organization's community challenges one of its decision. The policy is not designed to prevent disputes, but provides a mechanism to settle them fairly and impartially. Each sport organization will need to tailor its policy to fit the needs of its members. There is no "one-size fits all." Policies will differ, depending on a variety of factors including the size of the organization, available resources, and past experience.

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada provides a comprehensive Dispute Prevention Resource Centre ([www.sdrcc.ca](http://www.sdrcc.ca)), where interested parties have access to a vast array of information materials, tailored to meet the specific needs of athletes, coaches, officials, administrators, sport organizations, and the

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\* See related explanations on page 61.

legal community. Different model policies are also available and may be adapted and implemented by sport organizations as they see fit.

Questions a sport organization might ask itself regarding an internal appeal process include:

- A. Do we have an internal appeals process?
- B. If we do not yet have an internal appeals policy, how can we involve our members at every stage of the policy development and implementation, while seeking outside expertise if needed?
- C. If we have an internal appeals process in place, are members informed of the review procedures either before or at the time a decision is rendered?
  - i. Is the process well publicized within the member community?
  - ii. Does it abide by the laws of natural justice?
- D. Are the internal complaint procedures clearly defined?
- E. Is there an easily navigable link on our organization's website by which a member can lodge an internal protest?

- F. Do we have a downloadable form on our website to file internal complaints?
- G. Do we have a designated person(s) within the sport organization to assist members with respect to filing and following the progress of an internal complaint?
- H. Is there a fee for filing an internal complaint so as to discourage frivolous complaints?
- I. Is the internal appeal conducted quickly, and in a guaranteed time frame from the date of filing the internal complaint?
- J. Do we inform members in advance that they will be able to seek outside assistance with their complaint, should they believe the issue has not been resolved internally to their satisfaction?

Additional advice and assistance is available through SDRCC at link: <http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/appeal-policies.jsp> or by phone (toll-free) 1.866.733.7767.



# 8

For *Fair Play* to occur, the members of a sport community need to know, understand and accept the policies, rules, procedures and decision-making criteria used by their sport organization.

**Have we included an alternative dispute resolution clause in all agreements for our sport organization's member community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others) in the event internal mechanisms do not resolve a conflict? And have we endeavored to inform and facilitate access for our members to independent, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) solutions?**

When a member of a sport organization's community remains unsatisfied with the outcome of an internal appeal, he retains the right to seek a solution outside the sport organization. All sport organizations' decisions have the potential to be appealed in civil courts. The use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) presents a means by which conflict can be resolved without litigation, usually through the assistance of a mediator or arbitrator. The goals of an ADR system

are to: (1) Reduce time and costs for dispute resolution, (2) Maintain or improve the disputants' relationship, (3) Ensure that the outcome of the system is workable, durable and implementable, and (4) Develop a process that people can learn from. In addition, whereas a legal battle usually pits two or more individuals or groups against each other in a costly, time-consuming battle, ADR, offers a faster, less expensive way of resolving disputes. The types of ADR processes include prevention, negotiation, mediation, facilitation and arbitration.

In a sports setting, members of a sport organization, with the assistance of a third party neutral such as The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada, individuals and/or groups using ADR may work out their differences by developing solutions to problems based on their interests (interest-based solutions).

- A.** Do we have an ADR clause in our contracts and, if so, have we informed our members about how it operates?
- B.** If we do not have an ADR clause in our membership agreements, is this a conscious choice or one that should be reviewed by the membership in hopes of facilitating the resolution of conflict?

- C. Do our members understand how ADR neutrals can assist individuals and groups resolve issues in a timely, less expensive fashion?
- D. When issuing a decision, internal to the sport organization, on a member complaint, do we inform members about their ADR option and provide them with the information they need to begin that process?
- E. Do our members know about the existence of The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada, its powers and authority under the Physical Activity and Sport Act (S.C. 2003, c. 2), section 10: “The mission of the Centre is to provide to the sport community (a) a national alternative dispute resolution service for sport disputes; and (b) expertise and assistance regarding alternative dispute resolution”?

Additional resources, sample ADR clauses to member agreements and other assistance is available through SDRCC [www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca](http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca) or by phone (toll-free) 1.866.733.7767.

# 9

Giving a sport organization's members an opportunity to be heard can lead to fewer conflicts; and if conflicts DO arise, to be resolved more fairly and quickly.

**In an ongoing effort to reduce conflict within our sport organization, have we provided a forum for comment within our community (to athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others) with respect to issues that affect it?**

Having an open exchange between staff and management has proven sensible in a business environment because it makes people feel valued. The “flat” work environment has become a successful model for harmony within organizations. Similarly, in a sport setting, without teams, athletes and coaches, there would be no management of these individuals. It would therefore seem advisable for a sport organization to offer a forum by which its members can make suggestions about how policies and procedures that affect them can be improved upon. And further, that when some of the comments reach a critical mass,

policies, rules, procedures and criteria\* are changed to reflect the consensus. If change isn't forthcoming, even in the face of an overwhelming drive to change, then a sport organization should issue a statement indicating why a given change wasn't implemented. The decision-makers in a sport organization may ask:

- A. Do we provide a forum where members can speak up immediately if policies are unclear, incomplete or flawed? (Example: A group of members believes that penalties for unsportsmanlike behavior are not properly scaled to the severity of violations.)
- B. Is it possible for members to actively engage in the creation of policies, rules, procedures and criteria\*?
- C. Do we issue responses to comments in order to validate those who have made the comments?

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\* See related explanations on page 61.



# 10

Listening to, talking about and then implementing suggested changes from the people within a sport organization will lead to happier members and positive results on the field of play.

**Do we regularly make suggestions, including those generated by our member community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others), to our board and other authorities. on issues that could improve and streamline policies, rules, procedures and criteria\*, which would lead to greater openness, transparency and accountability while reducing conflict?**

Good ideas can come from many sources. Regularly assessing how a sport organization can operate more efficiently and fairly should be part of the organization's quarterly business. Changing outmoded ways of doing things can be difficult but often it's a simpler process than people think, and, once the changes have been implemented, those affected by the changes will be pleased.

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\* See related explanations on page 61.

A sport organization might improve upon the way it conducts itself by asking questions that include:

- A. Have we made reports to authorities on issues that could improve and streamline practices and inform the member community of changes as they occur in a well-publicized, easily understandable manner?
- B. Do we provide validation and acknowledgement to members who make suggestions?
- C. Do we systematically perform a self-evaluation, as an organization, on whether we apply best management practices?

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# 11

Part of playing fair is addressing what happens when rules aren't followed, and dealing with those involved in a way that contributes to transparency and fairness.

**In the event that complaints are lodged and appeals filed by our member community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others), how can we better identify and address the underlying causes of these complaints in order to reduce them in the future?**

Offering a way for the members of a sport community to voice the issues and concerns they have about sport organization policies, rules, procedures and criteria\* in advance of a formal complaint being filed, may be the best way to reduce complaints. A sport organization can gain valuable insight into how members are feeling and further, insight into the potentiality of complaints being lodged based upon the policies, rules, etc. that seem to be garnering the most negative commentary. A sport organization can then

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\* See related explanations on page 61.

pay heed to the negative commentary by making changes or by issuing acknowledgment of the comments and reasons why the sport organization does not see fit to make changes.

A sport organization needs to determine how it will manage the less than favorable commentary it receives about its policies and, then how it will respond in a way that minimizes complaints against it.

- A.** Do we keep a record of the types and numbers of complaints we receive?
- B.** Do the complaints arise as a result of confusion or claimed confusion over rules?
- C.** Do complaints arise when a member knows the rules but doesn't like the decisions made on them?
- D.** Do we use the comments we receive prior to complaints being filed and match them against the actual complaints in hopes of anticipating, and finally reducing the number of complaints?



# 12

Resources exist to help a sport organization get through periods of conflict successfully and to assist with avoiding it entirely so that they can get on with the practice of creating successful teams and athletes. All you need to do is ask.

**Have we taken advantage of the existing sport dispute prevention and resolution services available to us in an effort to both avoid disputes involving our member community (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and others) before they occur and for assistance should they arise?**

There are several useful resources available to the sport organization wishing to use them. *Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport* (see: [www.cces.ca](http://www.cces.ca)) is one such resource. The *Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada* is another. SDRCC claims its authority to assist in resolving sport disputes by the Physical Activity and Sport Act (S.C. 2003, c. 2). The SDRCC is committed to offering customized dispute prevention services to the members of the Canadian sport community. Here are some of the services the SDRCC may be able to provide: (1) a staffed information booth

filled with documents and handouts on dispute prevention and dispute resolution; (2) a presenter or a workshop facilitator on a topic of your choice (e.g. team selection, internal appeal policies, carding criteria, forms of alternative dispute resolution, and many more); (3) a representative of SDRCC to assist staff, committee members and/or Boards of Directors in improving internal processes to reduce the risk of disputes.

For a sport organization to operate efficiently and with transparency regarding its operation, the rules and regulations it uses to conduct business need to be made available and clear. All members of a sport organization community need to be kept informed of all matters that apply to them so they can concentrate on the development of winning athletes and teams.

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# \* Policies, Rules, Procedures, Criteria

These terms are often used interchangeably. Though there are similarities, they are in fact different. Here's how they are defined in this document:

## **Policies**

The broadest sets of guidelines. How a sport organization goes about its business. Policies will often serve a "mission" or goal.

(Example: The Swimming Federation has a policy not to discriminate based on sexual orientation);

(Example: The Biathlon team has a policy for team selection that includes objective and subjective criteria)

## **Rules**

Narrower than policies, rules are the nitty-gritty laws that need to be followed.

(Example: Fencing has a rule that athletes must be 16 years old in order to be considered for the team. *Note:* Being 16 is also one criterion for team selection.)

## Procedures

Processes to follow in executing rules, rulemaking and decisions.

## Criteria

Items to be considered in making decisions. Criteria can be objective and/or subjective. In the area of athlete selection, Objective criteria include: Quantifiable evaluations, such as lifting a certain amount of weight, recording a specified time, or accruing a designated number of points. *Objective* criteria are concrete and therefore less likely to give rise to conflicting interpretations. When a sport has the potential for objective criteria, it should be used. (e.g., sprinting—include the fastest three). *Subjective* criteria might include leadership qualities, an athlete's potential for improvement, work ethic, team chemistry, expression, heart, and past experience. Some sports (e.g., gymnastics) have both objective and subjective criteria. When subjective criteria are used, sport organizations need to have a pre-existing policy of what subjective criteria will be factored into selection, defining the terms and giving examples--all with the underlying goal of reducing the possibility of misunderstanding and conflict and thus contributing to Fair Play.



**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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