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The True Sport Agreement: Your Values in Action

A Team Approach



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Introduction

The True Sport Agreement forms a basis for teaching positive values and developing good character. Parents, coaches and organizers can also benefit from the creation of such an agreement, which is based on two simple questions:

- **How do you want to be treated?**
- **How do you want to treat others?**

Determining the shared values of a group serves as an excellent introduction to small-group democracy. This tool also helps to create an environment for coaches to work together to promote the development of young people both as athletes and citizens.

During the season, take time to observe and refer back to the True Sport Agreement. Look for examples of values being demonstrated and discuss these for a moment. The participants will be more engaged and their appreciation of these values will be enhanced.

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Module 1: Creating a True Sport Agreement

A True Sport Agreement answers a simple, but important question, “How are we going to treat each other in this group?” The agreement is created by teammates and coaches in an open and safe forum. Parents, referees, league officials and organizers can also use similar ‘social contracting’ as an effective tool to help design a positive sport experience for everyone involved¹.

Creating and using this type of agreement is an exercise in the journey toward democracy and is based on the fundamental belief that each of us has something of value to contribute.

The True Sport Agreement:

- promotes a strong sense of ownership among members of the group
- offers a solid and clear connection between all of the group’s activities
- keeps participants closely connected to ‘the what, the why and the how’ of any team or group
- reinforces the belief that each group member needs to contribute to the creation of values, rules and guidelines by which they will be governed

All words and phrases associated with the True Sport Agreement should:

1. be acceptable to all participants, and
2. apply to all persons equally and in general.

An important reason for creating a True Sport Agreement is that it helps the coach and participants establish a ‘play’ environment that is both physically and emotionally safe. Ideally, a True Sport Agreement is created when the group first comes together, as it will serve to initiate and maintain this physical and emotional safety within the group. A sense of physical and emotional safety is one of the most important factors for participants when deciding to stay involved in sport and physical activity.

The agreement also introduces a values-based approach to coaching, which helps to ensure the sport experience is positive and enjoyable for everyone involved, regardless of their ability level. The design and use of a values-based approach depends on several factors including the participants’ age, skill level, and personal history. Other factors unique to each group, such as how well the group knows each other and how long they may stay together, should also be considered.

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¹ Recreation and Leisure: Issues in An Era of Change, Third Edition, edited by Thomas L. Goodale and Peter A. Witt, Venture Publishing, Inc. State College, PA 16801, 1991, (ISBN 0-910251-42-8)

How to Create a True Sport Agreement*

Set the stage at the beginning of the **first** meeting by talking about the agreement that the group will develop together. As this is an opportunity for the participants to shape their sport experience, it is important to let them know that this is an agreement for everyone involved and that their input is important.

Next, involve **all** of the participants in two or three activities that encourage co-operation and support for each other in order to achieve success. These introductory activities should only take 20-30 minutes. (Appendix A provides some sample activities).

Then take a few minutes (no more than 5-10 minutes) and ask participants to discuss the activities, posing three questions to the group:

1. What did you have to do to succeed in these activities?
2. How did you expect to be treated by your teammates?
3. How did you treat your teammates during the activity? Did you treat them in a way that you would like to be treated?

First, ask each person to answer the questions for themselves.

Next, encourage everyone to share their thoughts with other members of the group.

Children at younger ages (5-8 years) will be able to help create a True Sport Agreement. However, they will need more prompting, input and assistance from the coach/leader.**

Typically the group will come up with words or phrases such as:

Helping each other	Trying our best	Having fun
Being safe	Being fair	Respect
Responsibility	Cooperating	Persistence
Challenge	Listening	Teamwork

Be sure to write down the ideas/values (like those listed above) as they are shared by the group or assign someone to be the scribe. The True Sport Agreement is now beginning to take shape. If necessary, coaches/leaders should include their own non-negotiable items on the list (e.g. no one uses 'put downs' and everyone needs to be on-time for practices and games).

Players and coaches can then vote on these ideas and values (e.g. have each person use 5-10 check marks or sticky 'dots' to select the 5-10 values they feel are most important for the team).

* For help facilitating this process, please visit our "Tips for Facilitating the Conversation" in Appendix B

** Please refer to "Ideas for 5-8 year olds" in Appendix D

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Example of a “dot” or “dotmocracy” vote

(Developed by an Under-13 girls soccer team)



Reviewing the results of the vote gives everyone a clear picture of what values and qualities the group feels are most important. These democratic choices then become the core values of the group and form the **True Sport Agreement**.

When all participants are involved in creating the agreement, there is a sense of ownership for everyone. To ensure the success of this tool, however, the group must also develop ways to keep the agreement alive and relevant throughout the season. After a few practices or games, reconvene as a group to determine if core values identified in the True Sport Agreement are still relevant.

Once players have had the opportunity to add to the agreement, have them sign-off on a copy. Make time for the group to clarify the meaning of these words and phrases. For example, what do we mean by “respect” and “being fair” and what do these concepts look and sound like during a practice or a competition? A True Sport Agreement must be a ‘living’ document that can change and evolve and should be referred to during team meetings, practices and games.

Participating in good sport is more than learning physical skills. It is also about fostering character and shared values. The physical skills alone are diminished without the presence of values and conversely, the group’s values will lack meaning without an emphasis on developing physical skills.

This is when children's sport transcends a physical endeavour and becomes an experience in developing people and a sense of community.

Coaches and athletes can work together to design situations and challenges that expose the group’s values. For example, in an upcoming soccer game they could choose to focus on using ball control skills they have practiced while also making an effort to support their team and respect the opponents and referee.

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Module 2: How to Keep the True Sport Agreement 'alive'

Learning and developing coaching skills includes finding ways to keep positive values, character and skill development a central part of the sport experience. So how do coaches and leaders keep a True Sport Agreement alive and relevant throughout the season? Here are some tips:

- Organize a team picture of everyone with the agreement and give a copy to all players on the team.
- Write all the agreement terms and values your group has identified on an item that relates to the sport, (for example, a soccer ball, or swim kick-board) and keep this item visible whenever the group comes together.
- Revisit the agreement in a natural, consistent way during practices and competitions. Children and coaches can discuss examples of values from the agreement as they occur during practices and competitions.
- Take advantage of 'teachable moments' by commenting on displays of good character or fair play.
- Include parents in the process to help generate and encourage conversations relating to the group values outside of the sport experience.
- Focus on one or two items from your agreement each time you come together.
- Ask participants to think about and look for specific values demonstrated during practice and/or competition.
- Values such as working hard at skill development, being persistent and challenging yourself can all be encouraged during practice and/or competition.
- Revisit the agreement as a team to ensure that the team is operating within its parameters and that it remains relevant.
- Give each player a True Sport patch (or sticker). At their discretion, they can reward an individual who demonstrates a True Sport Principle with the patch. Be sure that they explain why they are rewarding them. Have the athletes share their experience/story with the rest of the group.

Like the athletes in your care, as a coach/leader you must be willing to attempt new skills if you are going to improve and add to your personal coaching 'tool-kit'.

As the coach-athlete relationship develops and athletes mature, the exchange of ideas where the coach seeks more input from players on decisions that affect their sport experience can increase.

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Part of effective coaching is having the ability to choose the best approach relative to the situation. For example, in a situation where children are not treating each other fairly or where children may not be safe, the coach/leader may need to use a more directive style and then ask if the behaviour is consistent with the values in the agreement.

When young players feel their ideas and input are valued and listened to, they have a greater sense of ownership of their sport experience.

Regular debriefing activities encourage participants to reflect on their experience and to talk about what is going well and what needs to be improved. When participants are asked to reflect on what is happening during activities they become more aware of what is going on around them. Having regular coach-athlete discussions about the experience will help to create an environment where both individual and group learning is fostered.

The True Sport Agreement process is an effective way to involve participants in the decision-making processes and leadership of the group. Also, by taking ownership of their sport experience and helping to decide how they want the team to function, the participants will build strong bonds that could last beyond their sport experience.

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Appendix A: Sample Team Building Exercises

Bean Bag Shuffle

Adapted from Catch Them Being Good by Tony Diccico, Colleen Hacker, Charles Salzberg

Equipment: One stop watch for each team

Space: An open field or gym

Teams: Divide your group into two or three team of 6-8 individuals

Set up:

1. Provide each team with one small bean bag (you can buy them in a store or make your own).
2. Have the teams stand in a circle, any size they choose.
3. Set the challenge: the goal of this activity is to see how fast you can pass the bean bag from person to person so that everyone in the group has to have completely handled the bean bag and individually passed it on to another team member (in other words, simply "touching" the bean bag does not count as "holding and passing individually").
4. Assign a stop watch coach (make sure it is a trustworthy, competent timekeeper) to each group.
5. On the signal, "ready, set, go", teams begin to pass the bean bag around the circle as fast as they think they can while following all of the rules.

Implementation:

1. Record each team's time.
2. Challenge each team to beat their own time. Record each team's time.
3. Establish a winner based on time. Record that time.
4. Challenge the teams to beat the team with the fastest time.
5. Now ask, "Can you do it faster?" Let them try. Continue to record the times for each team.
6. Can you do it even faster?

Learning:

Eventually teams will learn that they can move very close together and make an even smaller circle so that it almost looks like a big mob of people. Then, they will learn that they can handle and pass the bean bag much faster, more efficiently, and all in one motion if they change their distance from one another and alter their team's configuration.

Debriefing Lessons:

At first, they think that winning is the only goal or that winning is when they simply "beat" another team. Ultimately, you want them to see that what they initially thought was good enough, fast enough and successful enough can actually be made better and faster. It is the same principle we learn in sport. With planning, motivation and ingenuity, they can learn skills and strategies to keep lowering their previous best time and therefore improve overall "team" performance.

That debriefing message can have season-long implications no matter what the age level or sport you play.

As a group, discuss:

1. What did you learn from this activity?
2. What helped you be more successful?
3. How did your team handle the challenge to be faster? Did you discuss strategies?
4. Did someone stand out as a leader on your team?
5. Was there any difference in your experience when the goal was to beat the other team instead of beating your previous best time?
6. What would you do differently next time?
7. How does this relate to a game situation?

Have fun!

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The Human Knot

(Adapted from www.group-games.com)

This activity teaches people to work together – in close physical proximity! The goal is to figure out how to untangle the human knot without letting go of hands. Also provides an opportunity to demonstrate communication, leadership, problem solving, teamwork, trust, and persistence, among other qualities.

Equipment: None

Space: A field or gym

Teams: Divide your group into teams of 7-16 individuals

Setup:

1. This game is versatile in that multiple group sizes can play. Form groups of about 10 people each.
2. Have each group standing, facing towards each other, in a circle. Each person should be standing shoulder to shoulder.
3. Instruct everyone to lift their left hand and reach across to take the hand of someone standing across the circle.
4. Next, have everyone lift their right hand and reach across to take the hand of another person standing across the circle. Make sure that no one is holding hands with someone standing directly beside them.



5. To play, the groups must communicate and figure out how to untangle the knot (forming a circle of people) without ever letting go of any hands.
6. If you wish, this icebreaker can be played competitively, in which the facilitator says "Ready, set, go!" and has all the groups race to become the first group to finish.
7. If any group member lets go of a hand (breaks the chain), then the group must start from the beginning, or you could impose a penalty/punishment for that person (e.g. wear a blindfold).

8. This game typically takes 15-30 minutes to complete. You can impose a time limit if you wish to make the game more challenging.

Debriefing Lessons:

When you are done with the Human Knot activity, as a groups discuss questions such as:

1. How well did your group work together?
2. What strategies did your group adopt?
3. How did it feel to solve the game?
4. What did you learn from this activity?
5. What helped you be more successful?
6. How does this relate to a game situation?

Variations:

To increase the difficulty level, you can either (1) blindfold some of the players or (2) require that the game be played silently (no talking).

Have fun!



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Appendix B: Leading the Charge: Tips for Facilitating the Conversation

1. Begin the session with a “hook”; an inspirational video, story, or quote that will get the team thinking about the true value of their sport experience. Ex. incredible sportsmanship video:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/05/01/earlyshow/main4061276.shtml>

<http://www.truesportpur.ca/en/voices-60-truesportchampions>

5 mins

2. Have the team complete 1 or 2 team building challenges. Try and find a game/activity that does not relate to your sport:

Blanket game: <http://www.campresources.co.uk/activities/Ice-Breakers/5.html>

Hula hoop challenge: <http://www.playworksusa.org/games/hula-hoop-challenge>

10 mins

3. Bring the group back in to discuss the activity. What were the successes, challenges, strategies, group dynamics, feelings, and outcomes? Help the team compare these to their experiences in sport by asking questions* such as:

- *What did you find difficult/easy about the game? How did you react?*
- *Did your team/group have a strategy? How did you come up with your strategy?*
- *What different roles did people on your team play (leaders, thinkers, doers, etc)? Did anyone's role change during the game?*
- *How did you/your team feel when you succeeded/didn't succeed?*

5 mins

4. Ask for a volunteer to act as scribe. Ask the team the question: **“How do you want to be treated as a member of this team (by coaches, trainers, teammates, officials, parents, fans, opponents etc.)?”** Allow the players to shout out answers as the scribe records them on a display (ex. whiteboard, flip chart, chalk board). You may need to help them get started, and could ask them to consider: respected, fairly, nicely, and valued. Don't forget to add your own non-negotiable items to the list if the athletes haven't raised them.

5 mins

5. Once you have developed a healthy list, help the team to explain what some of these generic terms mean to them in their own words. Some questions you could ask include:

- *Think of a time someone showed you/didn't show you respect, what did/didn't they say/do?*
- *How would you define the word fair? Is it the same as equal? If not, how is it different?*
- *How can someone show you that they value you? Is it something they say/don't say, or something they do/don't do?*

* You can expect a lot of different answers for all the questions. Appendix C provides some speaking points and possible responses to your prompting questions to help you prepare for the session.

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It may also help to provide some of your own real life examples. Encourage the team to give some personal and/or specific examples.

15 mins

6. Ask for a different volunteer to act as scribe. Ask the team the question: **“How do you want to treat others who are a member of/involved with this team (including coaches, trainers, teammates, officials, parents, fans, opponents etc.)?”** Allow players to shout out answers as before, while the scribe records them on a display. You may want to prompt them with questions such as:

- *Should this list be exactly the same as the one we just created, why/why not?*
- *How might we show appreciation for and/or recognize the different contributions people make to this team?*
- *How does the way I treat others affect the way I am going to be treated?*
- *When is it important to be conscious of my actions; only on the field, in the change room, during tournaments, at school, etc.?*

Again, it may be helpful to provide some of your own concrete examples.

Encourage the team to come up with some personal and/or specific examples.

20 mins

7. Conduct a “dotmocracy”. Provide each person with 5-10 stickers (or any other identifier such as placing a check mark) for each list that has just been created. They will use these stickers to identify by vote the 5-10 values of each list that they believe to be most important. The most popular values identified will help identify what your team truly values. These values will form the basis of your True Sport Agreement (see Appendix E for a sample True Sport Agreement).

5 mins

8. Ask for a new volunteer to scribe. This time, ask the team the question: **“How will we know that we have been successful this season?”** Be prepared for the team to answer in terms of tangible goals such as: *make it to playoffs, new personal best, finish in the top 3 of the league, move up a division etc.* Challenge the team to also consider that success might include: *everyone feels that they are part of this team, everyone feels comfortable giving their opinion, we had a lot of fun, we made some really great friends, and we are a well-liked and respected by our coaches, opponents, parents, fans, and officials.*

10 mins

9. Once a few concrete goals have been determined, ask the team the question: **“What will we need to do to achieve the success that we just defined?”**

Prompt the team by asking them:

- *Who will need to be included on this road to success (coaches, parents, players, officials)?*
- *Will we only need to contribute hard work and practice?*
- *How will we build a team where all feel that they are a contributing member?*
- *How will the behaviour we outlined above contribute to our success?*
- *Is it crucial that all team members are on board with this agreement?*

10 mins

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10. Ask the team: **“What happens if a member of this team does not reflect the behaviour that we have outlined in this agreement?”** Challenge the team to think about responsibilities and consequences and ask them; **“Whose responsibility is it to deal with a challenging team member; coach, parent, teammate, or captain?”** We want the players to take ownership and show accountability for team dynamics, and agree on fair and respectful ways of approaching difficult situations.
10 mins
11. Finally, a great way to get your team thinking about the True Sport values and what they mean to them may be to ask them to complete the True Sport Legacy reflection exercise (*Appendix F*). The True Sport Legacy asks the players to think of someone in their lives who has embodied the True Sport Principles and positively impacted/affected their lives.
5 mins



The information gathered in this session can then be compiled into a “formal agreement”, a True Sport Agreement that summarizes your collective values and goals.

- At the next team meeting or as part of a season kick-off celebration, ask each member of the team to review the agreement.
- Once everyone agrees that it accurately reflects your aspirations, ask each player to sign off on the True Sport Agreement and display it in a prominent area for all to see.
- Ask the players to suggest how their True Sport Agreement should look. Depending on their age, consider having the athletes design the True Sport Agreement themselves.
- Encourage your team to get creative as to how they “sign off” on it. Some examples include: *a large poster with each players hand print or finger print, a formal contract with each player’s signature, a collage of player photos, a team bracelet/wrist band, or a team patch/logo.* Refer to Appendix E: Sample True Sport Agreements.
- Use your True Sport Agreement as a rallying point to revisit the values that the team agreed upon, as well as a reason to celebrate the team’s successes as they occur throughout the season.
- Share your team agreement with parents and ask them to be a supportive and contributing partner on the road to the team’s success. Alternatively, you can repeat the entire exercise with the parents to compare and contrast the results – it is important that everyone is engaged in the process and shares the same expectations. Ultimately, everyone involved with the team will be comfortable with and committed to the True Sport Agreement.

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Appendix C: Animating the Conversation: Preparation is Key

This section outlines responses that you can expect to the prompting questions outlined in the “Leading the Charge: Tips for Facilitating the Conversation” section. This is intended to help you familiarize and prepare yourself with the True Sport Agreement exercise, in the hopes of making you feel more comfortable with the process.

(**Note:** This section focuses on the steps in the True Sport Agreement process where the group is asked to provide their input, suggestions and ideas so it does not address each step in the process.)

Step 3 – Bring the group back in to discuss the team building activity.

- *What did you find difficult/easy about the game? How did you react?*
 - I was unsure of the rules.
 - I had never played before/unfamiliar with the game.
 - I had played before, I knew the game well.
 - I was happy/excited when we won or sad/frustrated when we lost.
 - My team was not cooperating and we argued.
 - My team listened well and worked together.
- *Did your team/group have a strategy? How did you come up with your strategy?*
 - We watched the other team.
 - We learned from our mistakes.
 - We asked for help/clarification.
 - We used our teammates’ experience/prior knowledge.
 - We dove in head first and used the first idea that came to mind.
- *What different roles did people on your team play (leaders, thinkers, doers, etc)? Did anyone’s role change during the game?*
 - Some people took charge right from the start.
 - Others had really good ideas, and reasoned why things should be done a certain way.
 - Others were quick to try things out and to see what worked.
 - Roles changed as the dynamics of the activity changed.
 - Some were unwilling to step down from their role regardless of success.
- *How did you/your team feel when you succeeded/didn’t succeed?*
 - I was happy/excited when we won or sad/frustrated when we lost.
 - We felt like we worked well as a team and needed all members to contribute in order to succeed.
 - We had to identify strengths and weaknesses in the group in order to be successful.
 - We blamed each other when things weren’t going well.
 - We got down on ourselves if we felt like we were holding back our team.

Step 5 – Help the team to explain what some of these generic terms mean.

- *Think of a time someone showed you/didn’t show you respect, what did/didn’t they say/do?*
 - A teacher at school gave me the chance to explain myself.
 - A coach listened to my suggestion and incorporated it into our practice.

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- My parents let me stay out longer than usual if I promise to call to let them know where I will be.
 - My classmates interrupt me and don't give me a chance to share my opinion.
 - My friends keep our personal conversations private and do not judge me.
 - My teacher thanked me for working so hard and pushing myself.
 - My teammates laughed at me when I made a mistake.
- *How would you define the word fair? Is it the same as equal? If not, how is it different?*
 - Fair isn't always equal. There is a big important difference between the two.
 - Fair means free from favouritism or bias, impartial and honest. Equal is of the same measure, quantity, amount, or number as another.
 - People do not need to be treated equally to be treated fairly. People are treated differently because we are all different; we have unique needs and desires.
 - One player may need more time from the coach because a new skill is more challenging for them while another player may need less advice.
 - It is important for players to communicate their feelings if they feel they are being treated unfairly so it can be explained/resolved.
 - Do you think it's fair to expect others to treat you the way you would like to be treated?
 - It is important to remember to put yourself in someone else's shoes. How would you feel if this was happening to you?
 - I should have the same expectations for myself as I have for others on my team.
 - *How can someone show you that they value you? Is it something they say/don't say, or something they do/don't do?*
 - They want to hear what you have to contribute.
 - They ask you for advice and appreciate it.
 - They ignore/don't ignore you.
 - They interrupt/don't interrupt you.
 - They actively listen to what you have to say and provide feedback.

Step 6 – How do you want to treat others?

- *Should this list (how you treat others and how you want to be treated) be exactly the same as the one we just created, why/why not?*
 - There isn't actually a right or wrong answer as to whether the list should be the same but asking this question provide an opportunity to further enhance the conversation about treating others how you would like to be treated.
 - Everyone is different and bring different strengths and weaknesses to the team. It is a combination of these differences that will complement each other and make you a team.
 - It is important for players to communicate their feelings and to address issues if they feel they are not being treated the way they want to be treated.
 - Do you think it's fair to expect others to treat you the way you would like to be treated?
 - It is important to remember to put yourself in someone else's shoes. How would they I feel if this was happening to me?
 - I should have the same expectations for myself as I have for others on my team.

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- *How might we show appreciation for and/or recognize the different contributions people make to this team?*
 - Regularly and promptly attending practices and games.
 - Listening and actively participating at practice.
 - Calling the coach ahead of time if I can't make a practice/game or if I'm going to be late.
 - Thanking our parents/guardians for the time they spend supporting us in our sport.
 - Respecting officials on and off the field – accepting their decisions and abiding by the rules.
 - Acknowledging the importance of all players on the team and the individual strengths/contributions they bring to the team (ex. positive attitude, calm under pressure, tact, etc.)
- *How does the way I treat others affect the way I am going to be treated?*
 - People want to feel as though they are being treated fairly. They will find it difficult to treat you the way you deserve to be treated if they feel they are being treated poorly.
 - Resist the urge to react to negative behaviour with more negative behaviour. Two wrongs don't make a right.
 - Positive energy breeds positive energy.
 - Allow others to make mistakes and accept apologies when they are sincere. Everybody can have a bad day.
 - Forgive and forget.
- *When is it important to be conscious of my actions; only on the field, in the change room, during tournaments, at school, etc.?*
 - It is always important to be conscious of your actions. You are a representative of your team and your actions reflect what your team stands for.
 - In the parking lot, in the change room, in the stands, at the hotel, at a restaurant, at home, on the bus – these are all places where you can show others how well-mannered and respectful you are.

Step 9 – What will we need to do to achieve the success we want?

- *Who will need to be included on this road to success (coaches, parents, players, officials)? How will we recognize these contributions?*
 - Think about how hard it would be to participate as a player on this team without your parents, coaches, teammates and officials. All of these people give their time to help provide us with the chance to participate in sport.
 - It's always nice to take time to say "Thanks!" to those that help us along the way. Maybe it's a "Give Back" night or a simple "Thank You" but these gestures can make all the hard work worthwhile.
- *Will we only need to contribute hard work and practice?*
 - Respect for others.
 - A positive attitude.
 - Open lines of communication.
 - A welcoming, inclusive environment.
 - Gratitude.

Go For
It

Play
Fair

Respect
Others

Keep It
Fun

Stay
Healthy

Give
Back



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- *How will we build a team where everyone feels that they are a contributing member?*
 - Identify individual strengths and highlight them.
 - Allow others to try things and/or take on a role they might not otherwise do.
 - Support each other as we grow and change.
 - Actively listen to other opinions.
 - Celebrate and acknowledge contribution of all kinds.

- *How will the behaviour we outlined above contribute to our success? AND is it crucial that all team members are on board with this agreement?*
 - It is crucial that all players are on the “same page” when it comes to expectations and behaviour on this team.
 - Although it will likely change, it’s important that we have a clear vision of where we see ourselves going and be in agreement on how we are going to get there.
 - Everybody should feel that they have voice and that their opinion matters as we create and grow the relationships on our team.
 - This team is made up of many people and mutual respect is going to allow us to deal with challenges and adversity more easily, accomplish our goals and have FUN along the way!

*Go For
It*

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Fair*

*Respect
Others*

*Keep It
Fun*

*Stay
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*Give
Back*



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Appendix D: Ideas for 5 to 8 Year Old Children

1. Leaders/coaches need to use different vocabulary with this age group. Young children require simple, easy to understand phrases.
2. Use playful, simple activities such as tag and cooperative games and ask the questions:
 - When playing the game how were you treated by the others? Did you like the way your teammates treated you? Why or why not?
 - How do you want to be treated by others when you are playing a game or sport with them?
 - What is the best way to treat others' when you are playing with them?

They may or may not understand these questions completely. We have found that some groups come up with good responses to these questions; however, this is not consistent. Some groups may respond better to being further prompted by questions that relate to the play activities such as:

- What did we need to do to have fun and succeed in the game?
 - What makes our practices and games fun/good?
 - Why do you like to play games/sports?
3. Coaches/Leaders may need to ask more prompting kinds of questions such as: Is it good and/or does it make it more fun to...
 - play safe?
 - play fair?
 - help each other?
 - do our best?
 - be on time?
 - other?

4. Children in this age group will come up with values and qualities such as: be nice; play fair; help out; listen, don't hit; have fun; try hard. These words are the introduction to values such as respect, doing one's best, cooperating, good communication, fairness, emotional and physical safety, and responsibility so you are definitely on the right path!
5. Once you have developed an agreement, keep the agreement alive by talking with the group about what they want to add or adjust during the first 2 or 3 times together. Coaches/leaders can take one value at a time and have children focus on this value as a theme for each practice or game. For example, today we're going to focus on doing our best and for the following session the theme can be changed to cooperating well with our teammates. This helps children gain a better understanding of what their values agreement means.
6. Other ways to bring the agreement to life for young children include having a team picture taken with the group values listed under the picture. Have children sign off on this and keep the picture in a prominent place. You could also put the values on a team ball and bring the ball out when you're talking about your True Sport Agreement (Refer to Appendix E: Sample True Sport Agreements).

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It*

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Appendix E: Sample True Sport Agreements

The Ontario Soccer Association Region Five Program – 1995 Girls

How do you want to be treated?
How do you want to treat others?

Words or Phrases	Dotmocracy Results
Supportively	18
Honestly	11
Respectfully	9
Equally	9
No Put Downs	9
Encouraged	6
Leadership	2
Fairly	1
Helpfully	1
Truthfully	1
Kindly	1
Loyalty	1
Trustworthy	1
Teammate on field/Friend off field	1
Friendly	0
Safely	0
Gently	0
Nicely	0

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It*

*Play
Fair*

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Others*

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Fun*

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*Give
Back*

Wordle

Wordle is a great way to create a word cloud to display your True Sport Agreement. Visit www.wordle.net to create your own Wordle True Sport Agreement.



Turn your Wordle into a poster that everyone can sign, add it to your team's web site and/or include it in team communications.

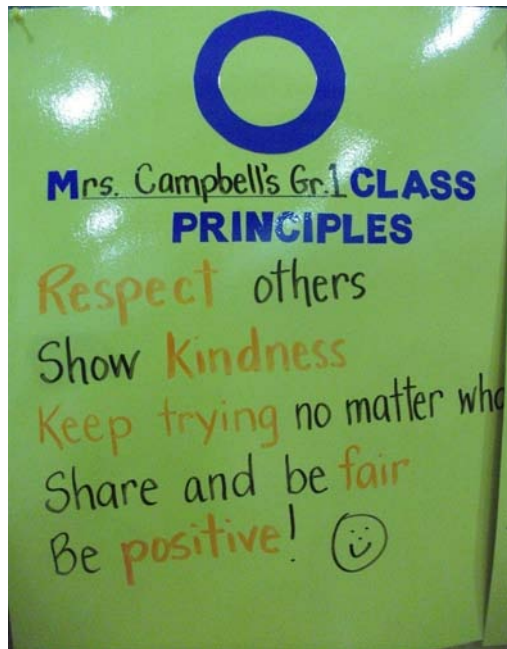


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Soccer Ball



Poster



Bracelets



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Appendix F: Your True Sport Legacy

Your True Sport Legacy

Do you know someone who embodies the True Sport Principles for Sport? If so, who are they? How do you know them? Which principle(s) do they represent, and how do they live them in their actions? How have their actions inspired you?

In the coming weeks we encourage you to reflect on the people in your life, and choose someone you know that helps you to answer the questions in the paragraph above. We would like you to create something that communicates how they have inspired you and pass it along as a gift to this person, explaining to them what they have meant to you, and why you have chosen them.

Then, send us a copy of your story (only has to be as long as the space provided on this sheet) so that we can post it to our website to share with others as an inspiration.

Mail to:
True Sport Member Services
350 – 955 rue Green Valley Cres.
Ottawa, ON
K2C 3V4

Email to:
info@truesport.ca

(The next page is an example of a True Sport Legacy that was submitted by ringette player).

*Go For
It*

*Play
Fair*

*Respect
Others*

*Keep It
Fun*

*Stay
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*Give
Back*



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My True Sport Legacy

My past coach, Bryson, is someone who I think embodies the True Sport Principles for Sport in every way. He is by far the most encouraging, honest and kind man I have ever had as a coach before.

I remember as a child growing up; I struggled with my skating and Ringette skills. Most times whenever I would try to pick up a pass, I would miss. By missing the ring, I would put myself down because I didn't think I was good enough to be on the team. Bryson would tell me that I should go after the things that are the most challenging.

One year, my team would get a lot of penalties, even though we weren't a dirty team. He would tell us before our games that we should play fair, play clean, and to be a good sport - which means no talking back to the referees. In addition, before every game, he would pump us up by having us cheer his special "Fire Up!" cheer.

Bryson has helped me as a player a lot. He wasn't one of those coaches that would yell at you if you screwed up. Instead, he would pull you aside with his white board, and he would SHOW you what you did wrong.

In my opinion, I think that Bryson has contributed to the sport of Ringette a lot. You would be so lucky to meet him. He is the nicest person you could ever meet. Thank you Bryson for inspiring me to be a better player!

Go For
It

Play
Fair

Respect
Others

Keep It
Fun

Stay
Healthy

Give
Back

Keep It Fun ○ Play Fair

Give Back ○ Respect Others

Go For It ○ Stay Healthy

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