

Section 1

Introduction

Values-based sport places values and principles at the heart of all policies, practices and programs in an effort to increase ethical conduct and decrease unethical behaviour. A values-based approach to sport will create good experiences for all stakeholders (e.g. athletes, participants, coaches, officials, parents, volunteers, allies, sport organizations).



True Sport is an approach to values-based sport that is founded on the core values of fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun. When the seven True Sport Principles (Go For It, Play Fair, Respect Others, Keep It Fun, Stay Healthy, Include Everyone, Give Back) are resident in the sport experience, positive sport environments that instill character, strengthen community and increase opportunities for excellence will result.



To realize these benefits, the sport we take part in must be values-based. Research indicates that the vast majority of Canadians intuitively understand the great and diverse benefits this kind of sport can deliver and that this is the kind of sport they want.

The CCES acts as a network leader for values-based sport and works to activate it by championing True Sport. This research initiative provides concrete evidence of these benefits and puts data and examples around this intuition and aspiration.

Purpose of This Report

There is more and more evidence that sport's benefits go far beyond the positive health effects of physical activity that have long been understood. A growing body of research points to community sport's fundamental role as a primary generator of social capital and related benefits across a broad spectrum of societal goals, as reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities, good health and well-being and climate action. Perhaps most significantly, no other domain of community life has demonstrated sport's capacity to connect so many young people to positive adult role models and mentors, opportunities for positive development, and help acquiring critical life skills.

This evidence has begun to change how policy makers, community organizations, the private sector, and sport organizations themselves view the role and importance of community sport. On the basis of these insights, a new picture of Canada's community sport system is emerging — that of a critical, yet largely untapped, reservoir of public benefit that, with intentional effort, can be made to deliver even more for Canadians.

Power of Sport

Sport provides a tremendous opportunity to provide meaningful experiences for all people who live in Canada. Extensive literature demonstrates how the many positive outcomes of sport participation improve the lives of all demographics. Continuing to advance equity and inclusion within sport should remain an important goal within Canada.

Targeted sport opportunities for populations with lower participation rates, such as new Canadians, individuals with disabilities and Indigenous peoples continue to remain an important goal. Promoting greater engagement in values-based sport for everyone in Canada through the inclusion of diverse stakeholders and networks will allow for greater understanding of how intersectionality influences involvement in sport.

The evidence presented in this report validates what Canadians have long intuitively known — that Canada's community sport system possesses a unique potential that we have only just begun to explore. The evidence also bears out Canadians' fundamental belief that realizing this potential is profoundly linked, not just to the availability of community sport, but to the quality of the sport experience itself.

Study after study has shown that the full value of community sport is only realized when sport is conducted in a certain way — when it is inclusive, fair, fun and fosters the pursuit of excellence. What

Canadians understand to be good sport — the sport that they seek — is, in fact, the sport that delivers the greatest benefits to their families and communities.

By entrenching values-based sport all across Canada, we can also improve the sport experience of those involved in sport, encourage more people to take up sport, and thereby increase participation and retention rates. Values-based sport will, by design, have a positive impact.

The purpose of this report is to enable communities, policy makers, and business leaders to see the tremendous potential that lies within our community sport system and to foster a shift in culture through a values-based approach that is guided by the True Sport Principles that will maximize this potential for all Canadians.

The sections that follow describe what we mean by community sport, sketch a brief picture of our community sport system, and summarize primarily Canadian evidence concerning the impact and value of community sport in relation to a broad range of societal goals that are important to the social and economic prospects of Canadians, the quality of life in our communities, and the ability of Canada, as a nation, to meet future challenges.

By entrenching values-based sport all across Canada, we can also **improve the sport experience** of those involved in sport, **encourage more people** to take up sport, and thereby **increase participation and retention rates**. Values-based sport will, by design, have a positive impact.



Who Should Read This Report?

This report is primarily aimed at public, private and not-for-profit decision-makers at the community, provincial, territorial and national level who are working to improve social, economic and environmental sustainability in diverse spheres of Canadian life, but who may not currently see sport as a potential means of advancing these efforts. These include:

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| <p>School boards, school administrators, educators and parents concerned with:</p> | <p>Municipal and regional government representatives and officials concerned with:</p> | <p>Provincial and territorial government representatives and officials concerned with:</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the quality of education; • making schools healthier; • reducing drop-out rates; • promoting academic achievement; and • fostering healthy child and youth development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing recreation opportunities; • protecting public health; • strengthening community development and neighbourhood renewal efforts; • accelerating economic development and investment attraction; • improving the social inclusion and integration of newcomers; • encouraging healthy child and youth development; • preventing youth crime and gang involvement; and • building environmental sustainability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting health, preventing and managing disease, preventing and managing obesity, and reducing health care costs; • strengthening education, reducing school drop-out rates and increasing academic achievement levels; • eliminating barriers to the full social and economic inclusion of women, Indigenous peoples, newcomers, people with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups; • fostering healthy youth development; • building youth employment skills; • preventing youth crime and gang involvement; and • promoting environmental sustainability. |

Power of Sport

The purpose of this report is to enable communities, policy makers, and business leaders to see the tremendous potential that lies within our community sport system, and to foster a shift in culture through a values-based approach guided by the True Sport Principles that will maximize this potential for all Canadians.

- Federal government representatives and officials concerned with:
 - public health, preventing and managing obesity, and helping provinces to reduce health care costs;
 - fostering civic engagement, building social capital and fostering national unity;
 - supporting community efforts to prevent crime and reduce youth involvement in gangs;
 - strengthening Indigenous community development and reducing rates of teen deaths by suicide in Indigenous communities; and
 - promoting regional economic development and investment attraction.
- Business leaders seeking effective ways to:
 - improve the productivity of their workplaces;
 - achieve philanthropic impact;
 - involve their employees in the community; and
 - make a positive contribution to Canada and to the communities where they work.

- Community organizations, staff and volunteers working to:
 - make their communities healthier;
 - provide children and youth with a good start in life and positive development opportunities;
 - promote greater social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged groups;
 - strengthen neighbourhoods and local economies; and
 - improve environmental sustainability and quality of life in their communities.
- Community sport athletes, volunteers, professionals and advocates seeking to:
 - build community and public support for community sport infrastructure, programs and participation.

Research Methodology

This report is based on a search of primarily Canadian literature encompassing primary research published in peer-reviewed journals, Canadian public opinion research commissioned by the CCES, Statistics Canada data on community sport in Canada, and secondary research in the form of literature reviews and other research syntheses undertaken by governments, inter-governmental working groups, and non-governmental and sport organizations.