



TRUE | SPORT  
SPORT | PUR

**WINNING HEARTS  
AND MINDS FOR  
GOOD SPORT**



The first time she steps over the white line onto the field, she feels that tingle. The first time she hears the whistle blow she knows that she's part of something much, much bigger.

She's a vital new link in the long, rich heritage of a game that is shared across her community, across the country and across the world. What she feels, and will always remember, is a spirit that unites her with all the parents huddled on the sidelines, with the official in centre field, with all of her teammates and all of her opponents. She's joining an unbroken tradition of a love for sport played right: a tradition shared by a community of millions of players playing millions of games.

She has joined a community that may speak many languages but that communicates most fluently through sport. She has joined a community that has many different beliefs, yet can come together at any field or rink. She has joined a community that has elevated physical competition to another plane. In short, she has joined a good sport community, bounded by principles, understanding and a set of behaviours that is just as evident as the white lines that mark out the playing field where she is running her little heart out.





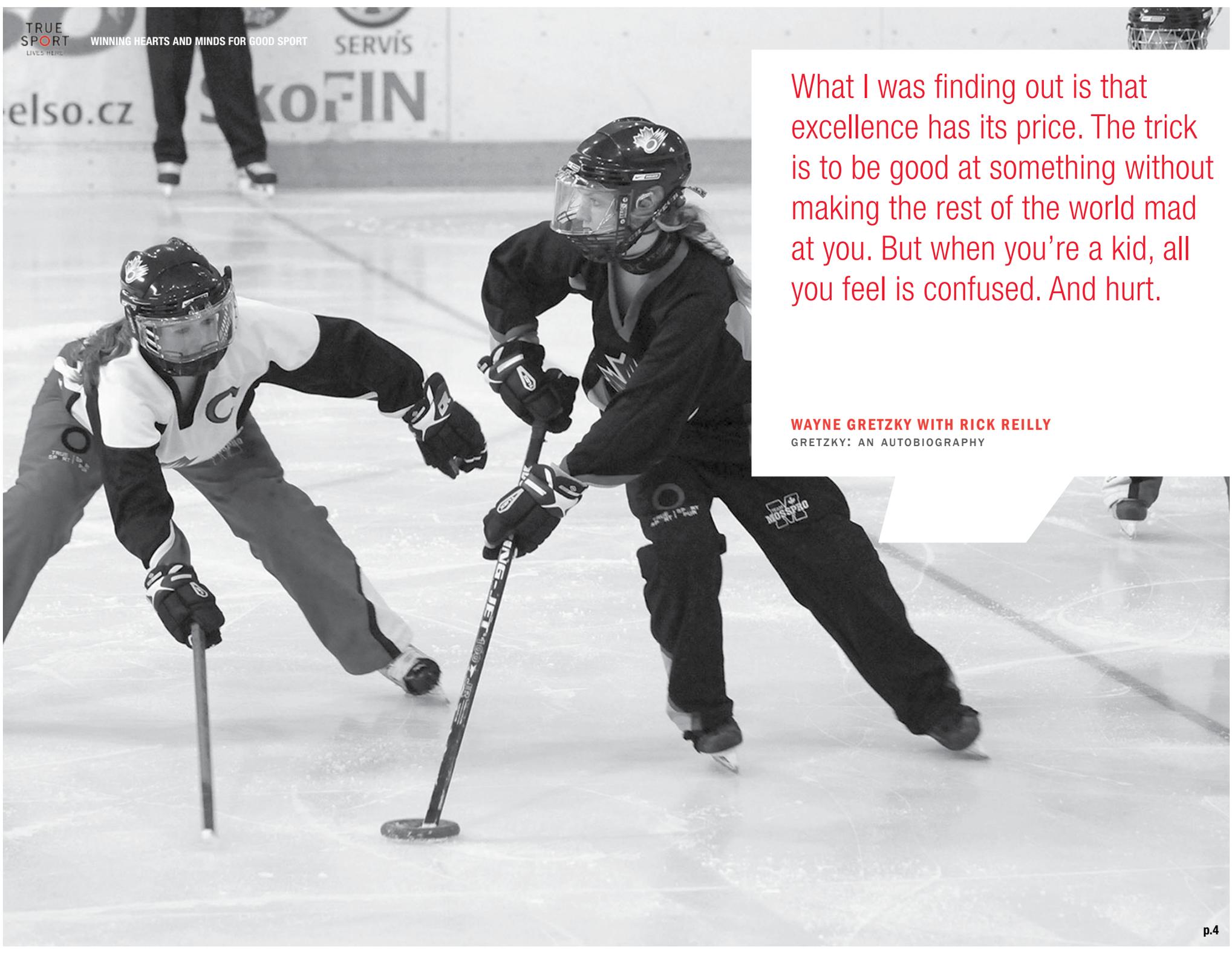
## WHEN SPORT IS GOOD WHEN SPORT TURNS BAD

**EVERY CHILD DESERVES** the opportunity to feel the purity and innocence of sport that has meaning. Every adult wants to see their child take part in sport that brings out the best in people, helps them discover their own potential and compels them to be the very best they can be, both physically and ethically. Whether you're participating in it or bearing witness to it, good sport can be truly brilliant, reminding us, if only for a moment, of all that is great about life.

But when sport becomes unethical, it becomes ugly. It becomes winning at all costs. It becomes the premeditated check into the end boards that leaves a hockey player with a brain injury. It becomes the calculated decision to use banned steroids to gain half a second on the track. It's the violent coach, the abusive parent and the negligent administrator.

When good sport is sacrificed for the lure of fame or fortune that comes with winning, we all lose a thing of beauty. In fact, we all just lose . . . period.

In celebrating our sport heroes (Gretzky, Klassen, Fox, etc.), we often hear about how these individuals overcame some corrosive and divisive nature of bad sport. What we don't hear about are the many more who don't stay in sport because it starts to chip away at their psyche and erode their feelings of self-worth; those who drop out of sport because somewhere along the line they stopped enjoying it. Sport loses many who could have derived so much and contributed so much—as athletes, coaches, parents, officials, administrators and community leaders. Sport let them down, and in letting them down, it let us all down. In that sense, sport is rarely, if ever, neutral. It's the best of times or the worst of times.



What I was finding out is that excellence has its price. The trick is to be good at something without making the rest of the world mad at you. But when you're a kid, all you feel is confused. And hurt.

**WAYNE GRETZKY WITH RICK REILLY**  
GRETZKY: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY



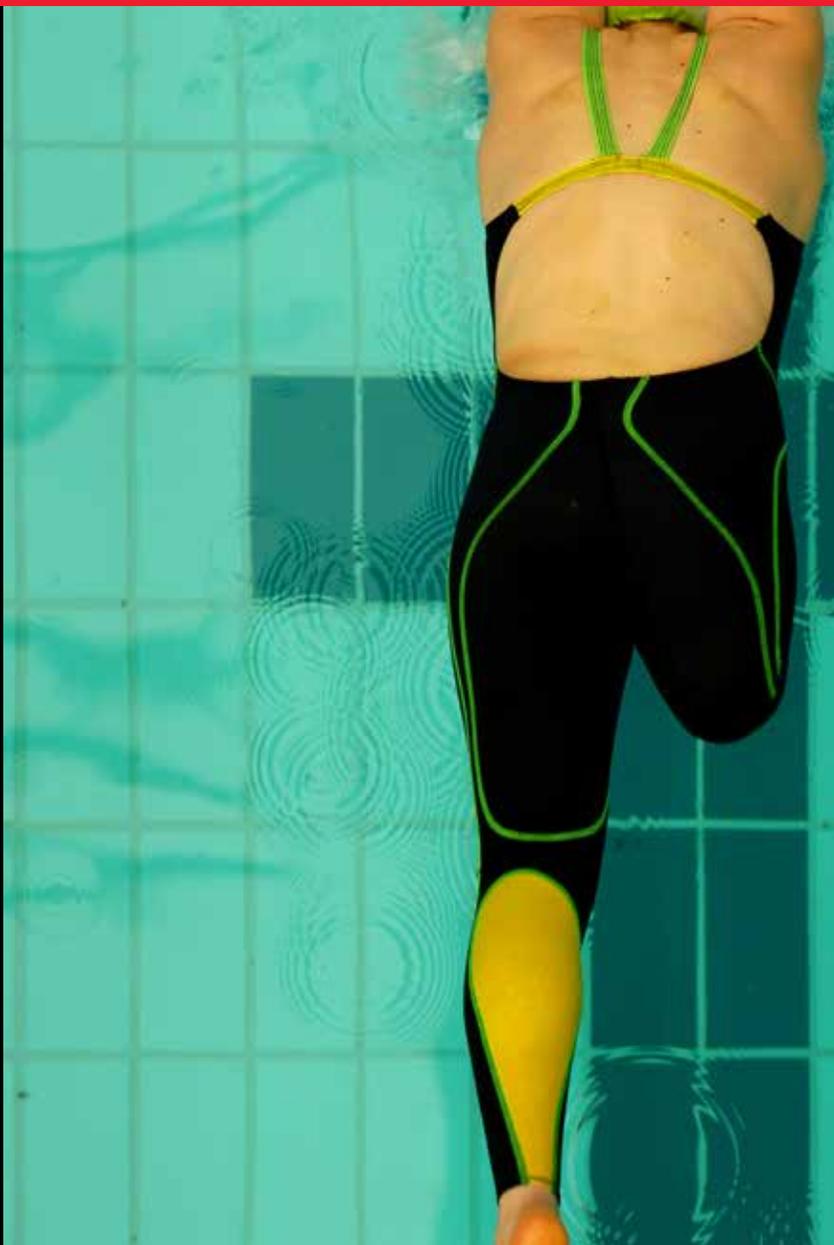
## WHY TRUE SPORT?

WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE don't find sport pure and simple, we lose our most precious sporting asset: the unadulterated joy of it. We lose the ear-to-ear smile of a child taking his first stumbling steps onto Saturday morning ice, looking up into the bleachers for mom and dad. We lose the shared tears of deep emotion, in defeat and victory. We lose the pride that swells in our hearts when we see young men and women showing respect for opponents and officials, even in the heat of fierce competition.

True Sport exists to try to create the right conditions for individuals to find this good sport, to value it, commit to it, nurture it and stay connected to it all their lives. True Sport wants to create good sport communities from coast to coast. For from these communities that foster good sport, and from the individuals who practice good sport, will come something that is truly great.

Yes, True Sport wants to see more high performance athletes winning medals and hoisting cups above their heads, but not at the expense of everything else. We raise our gaze beyond sport for sport's sake. We look higher, striving relentlessly for good sport, because we know that good sport can make a great difference in the lives of our kids, and we believe that the way we play together shapes how we live together.

People know what a good sport community feels like. They feel the buzz of anticipation at the track, court, pool, rink or field. They can see the camaraderie amongst children of all shapes and sizes. Facilities are cared for and treated with respect. Events are well supported, with volunteers stepping forward at every level. People also know what a bad sport community feels like. There are fewer supportive adults around. There's no welcoming smile. The atmosphere is intimidating. All the focus is on a few athletes. Organizations are controlled by cliques. Funding is low and public facilities mistreated.



## WHY TRUE SPORT? (CONTINUED)

**SPORT'S GROUP DYNAMICS**—fuelled by an innate desire to compete—brings ethics, behaviour and conduct naturally to every face-off, starting block and short corner. These life lessons take hold and ultimately extend into offices, factories and boardrooms when sport participants go to work. We need to constantly remind ourselves that it's the small actions and inactions that count.

As parents, we need to control our emotions. As coaches, we must balance the needs of the individuals on a team against that team's results. As an official, we must admit and explain mistakes. As leaders of sport organizations, we must recognize the impact sport has on our spirit as well as our body. These small wins add up to a big win: the great benefits of sport in society as a whole.

True Sport is a set of principles that, when properly applied and kept in balance to one another, produce good sport. Furthermore, True Sport provides a series of tools, programs and initiatives to give people, communities and organizations the means by which they can instill and act upon these principles and leverage the many benefits of sport for the betterment of us all.

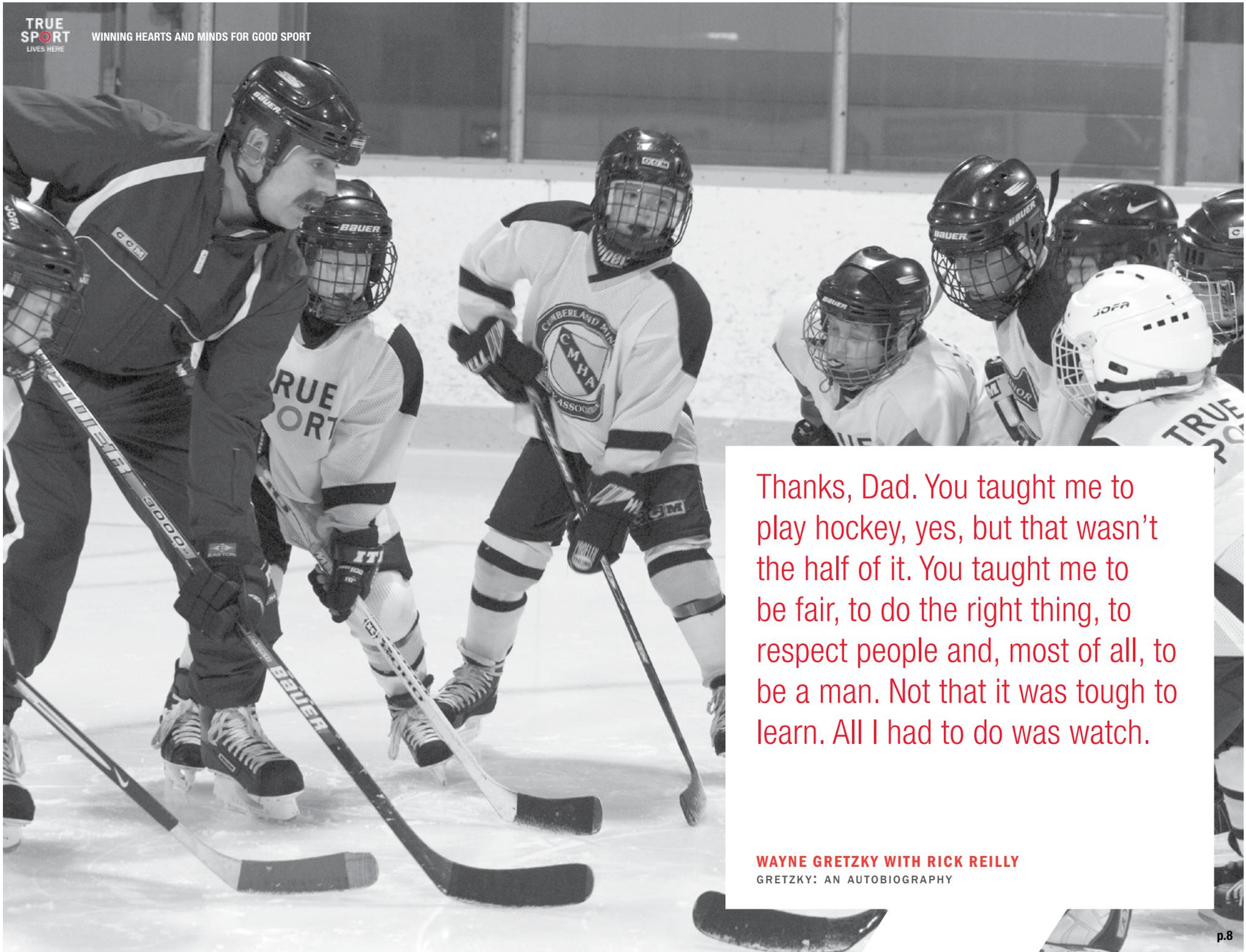
It is our belief that the combination of the purely physical and the profoundly ethical are necessary for the full development of a person, from child to adult. But beyond that, True Sport is a simple, direct way for every individual to contribute to winning hearts and minds in the service of good sport. It is a way to protect the next great one, and the not-so-great ones, by allowing them all to compete to the best of their ability in a continually fair, safe and open environment.



## GOOD SPORT CAN MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE

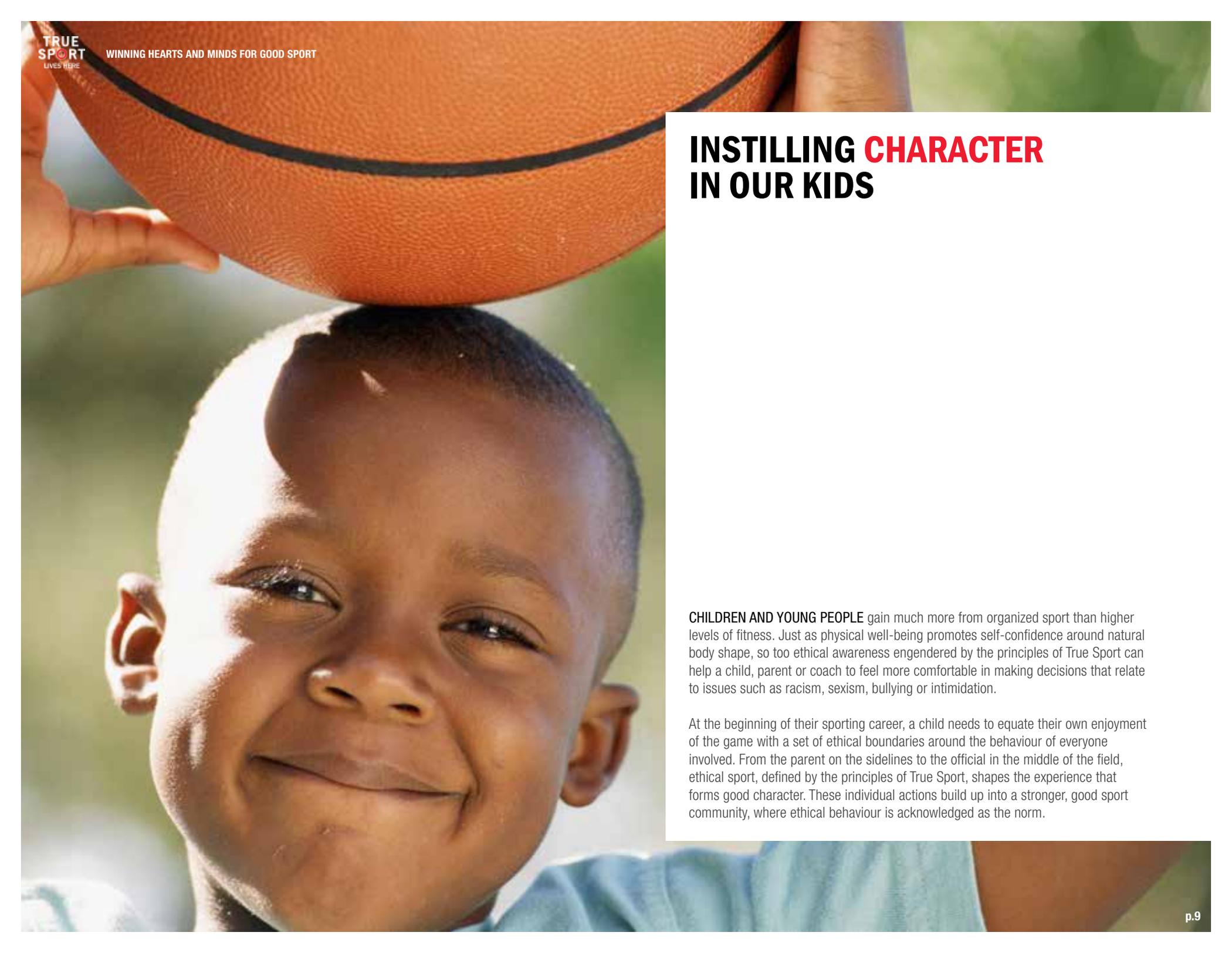
**TRUE SPORT IS NOT IN THE BUSINESS** of getting individuals to believe in the power and value of good sport. They already believe. What they need, and what they have been asking for in ever-greater numbers (according to our research) is a way to influence their sports community to safeguard and promote good sport. It is as if parents, coaches, officials and supporters lack the equipment to participate in a competition where the prize is the future of good sport. True Sport wants to give them that equipment.

True Sport is seeking to give individuals and communities the capacity to act on their positive beliefs about what good sport can do. We seek to instill character in our children, strengthen our communities and spur the healthy competition that makes athletes perform to the very highest standards. Taken together, these three areas create a powerful foundation from which good sport can be developed and thrive.



Thanks, Dad. You taught me to play hockey, yes, but that wasn't the half of it. You taught me to be fair, to do the right thing, to respect people and, most of all, to be a man. Not that it was tough to learn. All I had to do was watch.

**WAYNE GRETZKY WITH RICK REILLY**  
GRETZKY: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark skin and short hair, smiling gently. An orange basketball is balanced on top of their head. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The lighting is bright and natural, highlighting the child's features and the texture of the basketball.

## INSTILLING **CHARACTER** IN OUR KIDS

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** gain much more from organized sport than higher levels of fitness. Just as physical well-being promotes self-confidence around natural body shape, so too ethical awareness engendered by the principles of True Sport can help a child, parent or coach to feel more comfortable in making decisions that relate to issues such as racism, sexism, bullying or intimidation.

At the beginning of their sporting career, a child needs to equate their own enjoyment of the game with a set of ethical boundaries around the behaviour of everyone involved. From the parent on the sidelines to the official in the middle of the field, ethical sport, defined by the principles of True Sport, shapes the experience that forms good character. These individual actions build up into a stronger, good sport community, where ethical behaviour is acknowledged as the norm.

# STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

**GOOD SPORT COMMUNITIES** value every individual child or adult who participates. They do so not because everyone is guaranteed to win by changing the rules in favour of the disadvantaged. They do so because every participant believes that true competition is fair, safe and open for everyone.

That's what gets kids up early on Sunday mornings. That's why coaches give up their valuable evenings and weekends. That's why parents trust sport to build character. In the right environment, sport comes closer than almost any other cultural activity to delivering equal opportunity for all. Children instinctively understand that the rules need to apply to everyone if sport is to have meaning for anyone.

In practical terms, there is ample evidence to suggest that where communities play ethically, they live ethically too. Kids brought up to understand and embrace the True Sport Principles are less likely to commit crimes and less likely to experiment with drugs or alcohol. It's almost as though the gathering together of individuals in a good sport community galvanizes the wider public to create a kind of shared 'sports parenting'. People get to know one another better through regular contact at sport events. They gain acceptance of differences by focusing on what is universal. And children see role models all around them, role models that every parent wants for their child and their community.



## INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCELLENCE

**GREAT COMPETITORS LEARN YOUNG** that good sport needs to be 'we' more than 'me'. Even in individual competition, it's the integrity of other competitors that gives meaning to any performance. That's what we call True Sport character, and that's what makes a great competitor. A great competitor, in our definition, is not the MVP, although they could be. A great competitor is the child who takes his turn on the bench even though he's on his way to a hat trick. A great competitor calls the referee immediately when he sees an injured opponent. A great competitor reassures a teammate who has just scored on his own goal.

In the long run, maximum competition leads to excellence. If every child who wants to play does play, it's more challenging to make it to the top. If a child keeps playing and practicing because he still finds joy in the game, there is greater opportunity for that child to grow into a gold medalist. If good coaches stay in the game longer, they have the opportunity to make a greater impact. Enhanced competition thrives at every level. Net result: athletes who have been stretched to perform to a higher standard more frequently throughout their career. For us, great sporting communities lead naturally to great individual achievements.



## THE PRINCIPLES OF TRUE SPORT

TRUE SPORT IS DEDICATED to the notion that good sport can make a great difference. It is our mission to deliver programs and initiatives that...

- Enable participants, parents, coaches and officials to articulate and act upon their deeply held belief in the virtues of good sport.
- Enable participants, parents, coaches and officials to identify with others holding similar values.
- Create a fair, safe and open atmosphere where good sport can grow stronger through inclusive competition at all levels.

To achieve these goals, we promote the following True Sport Principles, which Canadians believe represent what a good sport experience is and entails. For sport to be truly good and have the opportunity to make the greatest difference, all seven of these principles need to be in play at all times, working in perfect balance with one another.

# TRUE SPORT PRINCIPLES

## KEEP IT FUN

Find the joy of sport and have a good time. Keep a positive attitude and look to make a positive difference, on the field and in your community.

## GO FOR IT

Always strive for excellence and rise to the challenge, but never at the expense of others. Discover how good you can be.

## PLAY FAIR

Play honestly and obey the rules, in letter and spirit. Winning is only meaningful when competition is fair.

## INCLUDE EVERYONE

Share sport with others, regardless of creed, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or ability. Invite everyone into sport to make it more meaningful for the whole community.

## RESPECT OTHERS

Show respect for everyone involved in creating a sporting experience, both on the field and off. Win with dignity and lose with grace.

## GIVE BACK

Always remember the community that supports your sport and helps make it possible. Find ways to show your appreciation and help others get the most out of sport.

## STAY HEALTHY

Place physical and mental health above all other considerations and avoid unsafe activities. Respect your body and keep in shape.



## TRUE SPORT'S BEGINNINGS



CANADIAN  
CENTRE  
FOR  
ETHICS  
IN  
SPORT

**THE DRIVING PRINCIPLES OF TRUE SPORT** were identified through a series of in-depth and enlightening consultations with Canadians from coast to coast. Leading this consultation, as well as subsequent programs and initiatives, has been a not-for-profit organization called the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES).

The CCES helped create True Sport in the early 2000s in an attempt to go further upstream and address the root causes of unethical sporting behaviour, such as doping, before they could become manifest in our high performance athletes. At the time—and still today—the CCES wanted to look at what could be done early in an elite athlete's career to shape the kinds of attitudes and beliefs that would prevent him or her from engaging in unethical behaviour down the road.

Respecting its early leadership and involvement, the CCES has not created True Sport alone. True Sport is truly member-based and member-driven, and other members that have taken an early leader approach to sharing, promoting and supporting the principles of True Sport, including the True Sport Foundation (formerly the Spirit of Sport Foundation), Skate Canada, the town of Huntsville and Yukon Territory.

## WORKING WITH OTHERS

**ONE OF THE OTHER WAYS** we achieve our aims is by cooperating with others in the sport culture, from grassroots to high performance. Great teams are made up of individuals whose complementary styles add up to something greater than the sum of its parts. In the sphere of physical culture, that sentiment has never been more relevant.

True Sport stands alongside many organizations whose goals we applaud and support. It is complementary to—but also distinct from—other key programs and causes such as ParticipACTION, Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) and many others. True Sport emphasizes the power of principle-driven sport to contribute, yes, to physical well-being, but also to produce so many more benefits for young people and their communities through the training of “the ethical muscles” of young people.

In this regard, True Sport fulfills a role that no other organization in Canada does: we focus on how values-based, principle-driven competitive sport can positively influence the success and behaviour of participants on, off and beyond the field of play. It is a role that Canadians believe is necessary, as evidenced by our own research and by ongoing public debates over issues such as concussions in hockey.

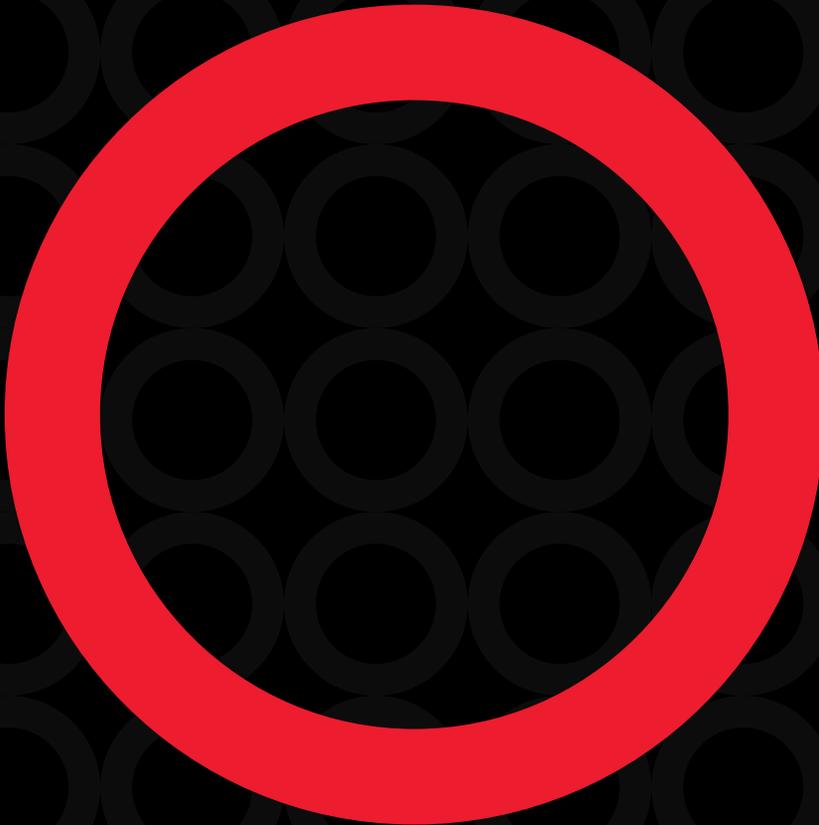
## THE TRUE SPORT BRAND

SINCE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, there has been a relentless commercialization of sport by brands that still dominate the landscape. In today's competitive sport industry, it is vital that good sport has its own brand, and True Sport's red circle is that brand. It suggests a team that everyone can join in order to foster a national movement toward good sport. And it is a branded initiative because without a brand, we will not be able to compete with the other forces seeking to control the debate over what constitutes 'good sport'.

The True Sport brand sums up the powerful notions of good sport—meaning fair, safe and open—and ethical sport, meaning sport that is organized and practiced with ethical intent. It stands for and recognizes sport as striving towards excellence at every level. True Sport understands that to be significant and to have meaning—in other words to be “true”—sport must be competitive, with winners and losers. That is what makes sport, sport and is what differentiates it from physical activity for the sake of health and well-being or communal activity for the sake of socializing and camaraderie.

More than anything, the True Sport brand is symbolic of constantly aiming for personal bests, from childhood onwards: personal bests that are both physical and ethical. Accordingly, True Sport is asking participants, parents, coaches, officials and supporters to recognize the connection between a winning performance and the True Sport Principles that help maintain the integrity of those achievements.





## THE **TRUE** SPORT LOGO

As with any strong logo and brand identity, there is a story behind ours.

**THE HEART OF SPORT** — The red circle represents the central letter in the word sport, symbolically conveying that the True Sport Principles are at the very heart of sport. When we say, “True Sport lives here” we mean that you can trust that all of the participants are aiming for fair, safe and open competition that leads others towards good sport by example.

**INTEGRITY** — The circle is one of the strongest and purest of graphic shapes, used as a symbol throughout history and across cultures to connote a sense of unity, integrity and wholeness.

**COMMITMENT** — The circle, when seen as a ring, represents a true and lasting commitment, and displaying it makes a public declaration of that commitment.

**CONNECTION** — The circle can also be seen to reflect the concept of an open social network. It has no sides and is open to all who subscribe to the principles and purpose of True Sport. It's a seamless connection from one True Sport community to another: a connection that makes us all stronger.

Becoming a True Sport member is the simple step that we ask everyone to take. Just as there are many ways to support a favourite sports club or team, there will be many ways to express support for True Sport. Whatever form that expression of support takes, the True Sport logo offers instant recognition among those of like mind and practice.

Sports remain a great metaphor for life's more difficult lessons. It was through athletics that many of us first came to understand that fear can be tamed; that on a team the whole is more than the sum of its parts; and that the ability to be heroic lies, to a surprising degree, within.

**SUSAN CASEY**

AUTHOR, EDITOR OF SPORTS ILLUSTRATED



## CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE OF SPORT FROM THE GROUND UP

Competition lies at the very heart of good sport. What child doesn't want to score a goal, win a tournament, and be the star? It is only when the pursuit of victory overshadows or excludes all other True Sport Principles that good sport goes bad. There are millions of people across Canada who recognize this, and we believe that as we connect networks of activists for good sport there will be no hiding place for bad sport. In other words, ethical sport will win as more and more of us work together.

True Sport's role is in actively promoting competition that is healthy, creating a culture where competition brings people together and strengthens the bonds between them. When coaches teach in good sport environments, children and young adults learn that respect requires give and take. When good sport takes the field on weekends, ethics goes to work during the week. When people who play good sport smile in defeat, their community is more resilient in the face of hard times.

Communities who support their teams put down stronger roots. Those teams, in turn, serve as a model for the wider society that surrounds them, teaching parents as much as children about collaboration and collective responsibility. In the midst of healthy competition, cooperation and camaraderie can grow. And in seeking greater glory, the community can find the greater good.

Wherever there is organized sport, there's an opportunity to ensure it's good, providing opportunities for ethical literacy to be developed in our kids which will set them on the right path as they mature. The people of Canada have told us that they want good sport and a popular movement is gaining momentum. With your help, it will become unstoppable.



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