

Episode 1: Introduction to True Sport: Discovering Good Sport

00:00:01:08 - 00:00:07:05

[Intro music]

00:00:07:05 - 00:00:27:02

SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Welcome to the True Sport Podcast Series, brought to you by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, known as the CCES. The CCES is excited to bring you a four-part podcast series where we'll explore how activating True Sport can foster a positive sport culture and provide sport with the best chance to reach its full potential.

00:00:27:02 - 00:01:48:07

SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

In the spirit of sport, we acknowledge that we gather on the traditional and unceded territories of Indigenous Peoples across the expansive nation of Canada. From coast to coast to coast, these lands have hosted countless sporting events, competitions, and moments of athleticism. We recognize that many of these activities, from traditional games to modern sports, have deep-rooted histories among Indigenous communities.

We respectfully acknowledge that the head office of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg People. We honour this land as well as all other First Nations, Métis, and Inuit lands and territories on which we work. The CCES recognizes the outstanding contribution the First Peoples make to sport and acknowledges the power of sport to promote reconciliation and address inequality.

Just as in sport, where teamwork and respect for one another are fundamental, we understand that acknowledging the traditional territories is a collective effort towards reconciliation. It's our shared responsibility to learn from, listen to, and support Indigenous athletes and communities to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and safe sporting world.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

The CCES's vision is that sport is fair, safe, accessible and inclusive.

We believe the fundamental purpose of sport can and should be to make a positive contribution to Canadian society

Yes, and we believe that ethical sport is the best way to achieve that.

In this podcast series, really excited to explore the True Sport Principles, discuss best practices, and chat with inspiring leaders who are activating True Sport and bringing the True Sport Principles to life.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Through the four episodes in this series, we'll offer you some useful insights, strategies, and real-life examples of how to foster a positive sport environment. Whether you're a coach, parent, guardian, volunteer, and/or a sport administrator, this series will provide valuable perspectives on building and sustaining True Sport as the approach to values-based sport. We hope to inspire you to help contribute to building good sport in Canada!

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

But first, here's our Did You Know? segment, where we'll share an interesting fact connected to True Sport!

Today, we're highlighting four-time Canadian gymnastics Olympian Ellie Black who won the Paris 2024 Fair Play Award. This award is presented by the International Fair Play

Committee in collaboration with the International Olympic Committee to recognise athletes who exemplify the spirit of fair play, sportsmanship, and respect for others – all of which are key elements of the True Sport Principles. We wrote about Ellie’s achievement in the September edition of the True Sport newsletter, which you can find at truesport.ca.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

In this episode, we’re going to introduce True Sport and explore the seven True Sport Principles. We’ll explain the foundational values and how they can transform the way we experience and engage with sport in our communities. And we’re also going to lay the groundwork for understanding how True Sport can help you to create a positive and inclusive sport culture.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

For a little bit of background, True Sport was established in 2004 in response to a growing concern that sport wasn’t living up to its full potential as a valued public asset. Prior to that, in 2001, Canada’s Federal and Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for sport got together to discuss how to bring ethics and respectful conduct back into Canadians sport because they thought that cheating, bullying, violence, aggressive parental behaviour, and doping were undermining the positive impact of community sport in Canada. Their first step was signing the London Declaration as a means to affirm positive sporting values and principles.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

Then in 2002, the CCES conducted a nationwide survey, and the results clearly showed that sport plays an important role in the lives of Canadians.

Over 90% of Canadians surveyed believed in sport’s capacity to contribute to the development of youth, however, less than 20% felt the sport system in Canada was delivering on that promise. This survey revealed a big gap between the sport we have and the sport Canadians want.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

Then in 2003, Canadians at many levels of sport— from parents, and coaches, to high performance athletes — came together through a symposium entitled “The Sport We Want.” Several strong messages emerged from this gathering.

Most importantly Canadians identified a clear desire for a sport model that teaches and reflects positive values like fairness, excellence, inclusion, and fun. These values now known as the True Sport values are further expressed through the seven True Sport Principles, which we’ll discuss now:

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Yes, that’s a great place to start! Let’s review the True Sport Principles and their descriptions, which will help give some context for each one!

Go For It – Rise to the challenge – always strive for excellence. Be persistent and discover how good you can be.

Play Fair – Understand, respect and follow the rules. Play with integrity – competition is only meaningful when it is fair.

Respect Others – Show respect for everyone involved in creating your sporting experience, both on and off the field of play. Win with dignity and lose with grace.

Keep It Fun – Find the joy in sport and share it with others. Remember what you love about sport and why you play.

Stay Healthy – Always respect and care for your mind and body. Advocate for the health and safety of yourself and those around you.

Include Everyone – Recognize and celebrate strength in diversity. Invite and welcome others into sport.

Give Back – Say thanks and show gratitude. Encourage your sport group to make a difference in the community.

When these seven principles are intentionally and consistently activated on and off the field of play, it helps to create positive sport experiences and leads to a good sport culture.

And when we commit to these principles, we're more likely to see the behaviours and culture we want in sport experiences

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

We're often asked what it looks, feels, and sounds like when the True Sport Principles are part of a sport experience...

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Yes! To help us explain this to other people, we teamed up with researchers from Queens University and asked them to capture a summary of behaviours for someone who lives the True Sport Principles and examples of how people and environments can exemplify them.

One outcome from the research was a set of infographics that we call the True Sport Principles in Action infographics, which we'll walk through now. If you want to see them for yourself, the infographics are available on our website under the resource tab at truesport.ca.

Starting with Go For It behavioural indicators of someone who lives this principle include having a growth mindset, demonstrating perseverance when faced with challenges, and having a willingness to experiment with creative solutions or approaches.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

And a True Sport Environment that exemplifies the Go For It Principle is energizing, motivating, judgement-free, and supportive

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Behavioural indicators of someone who lives the Play Fair Principle include understanding and respecting the rules of the game, contributing to an equitable environment, and having a willingness to hold themselves and others accountable.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

And a True Sport Environment that exemplifies the Play Fair Principle is inclusive, supportive, promotes equity, and encourages fair participation.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Behavioural indicators of someone who lives the Respect Others principle include using polite and respectful language and actions and being welcoming and inclusive towards all.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

A True Sport Environment that exemplifies the Respect Others Principle is welcoming to everyone and is physically and emotionally safe.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Behavioural indicators of someone who lives the Keep It Fun principle include expressing enjoyment through laughter, smiling, and creativity, and demonstrating hustle through effort and eagerness.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

A True Sport Environment that exemplifies the Keep It Fun Principle fosters positive conversations, has spectators and participants who are encouraging and supportive. And also allows time for unstructured activities so participants can explore new skills.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Behavioural indicators of someone who lives the Stay Healthy principle include focusing on physical, psychological, and social well-being like: Choosing nutritious foods, employing strategies for coping with failure and developing and nurturing positive relationships.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

A True Sport Environment that exemplifies the Stay Healthy Principle supports and models healthy decisions, while fostering trust, support, and autonomy in participants.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Behavioural indicators of someone who lives the Include Everyone principle include inviting, welcoming and sharing sport with all people, particularly those from equity-deserving groups.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

A True Sport Environment that exemplifies the Include Everyone Principle adapts programming, includes language diversity, and ensures diverse representation.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

And finally, Behavioural indicators of someone who lives the Give Back principle include initiating and supporting positive community contributions and showing appreciation for those who make sport possible, such as coaches, officials, parents/guardians, volunteers, facility operators and administrators.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

A True Sport Environment that exemplifies the Give Back Principle values the team or organization's presence in the community and models and reinforces gracious and grateful behaviors.

Understanding how the True Sport Principles look, sound, and feel helps us to answer some of the most common questions we get asked...

Why should we activate True Sport? How can we implement it? And who's responsible for activating True Sport?

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

To wrap up this episode we'll focusing on the who and why. Be sure to tune in to the next episodes when we'll have a conversation about the how!

So, who is responsible for activating True Sport?

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

Anyone and everyone! The great thing about True Sport is that anyone can get involved to make a difference! We all have a role in creating a more positive and inclusive sport culture.

True Sport members include: athletes, coaches, officials, sport organizations, communities, citizens, teams, schools, allies, and facilities.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

Wow, that's a great list! And each of these roles in sport is connected and by working together, we can build a positive sport culture.

So, why should we implement and activate True Sport?

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

Activating True Sport starts with an intentional and meaningful commitment to create positive sport experiences, and in the short term, positive experiences can lead to increased participation and retention of all participants including athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, board members... and so on

From there, we have the capacity to create and maintain a culture of good sport. Once we've fostered a culture of good sport, it creates the conditions to realize the benefits of good sport, which we characterize this way: by teaching values through sport that will last a lifetime, we are instilling character by connecting people through positive sport experiences, we are strengthening communities, and by increasing the number of confident and competent lifelong participants in sport, we are increasing opportunities for personal excellence.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

We should also activate True Sport because good sport doesn't happen by chance. It needs an intentional and consistent commitment to a values-based approach at all levels of sport and across all groups to be successful.

True Sport connects groups and individuals through a common language and shared vision of what good sport can do – from coast to coast to coast.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

True Sport can also help sport organizations attract and retain good people, such as board members, volunteers, athletes, coaches. When people are enjoying themselves, they want to stay involved and bring others along with them.

A commitment to fostering positive sport experiences can lead to culture change and can ensure the benefits of good sport are realized. Finding strategies to integrate True Sport into what you're already doing can ensure that your approach is meaningful and intentional.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

To sum up, a values-based approach can foster a positive sport culture and provide a better chance for sport to deliver on its full potential.

Together, we can be guided by a set of principles and commit to igniting positive change in sport while setting standards for future generations to build on. The True Sport Principles act as a guide for the behaviour we want in sport.

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

True Sport is positive, proactive, and prevention focused.

When True Sport is meaningfully activated, it leads to a culture that reflects the sport we all want and reclaims the promise and potential of sport.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

Yes exactly - to reclaim the promise and potential of sport, we need to have a sport culture that places values at the heart of policies, practices and programs!

That's it for this episode. Thanks for joining us!

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SPEAKER (Sarah Bennett)

We recognize that changing culture is that long game that takes time and effort. But with a consistent and intentional commitment to True Sport we can create the positive sport culture we all want.

For more information about True Sport, check out our website at truesport.ca. You can subscribe to the monthly newsletter, find tools and resources, and declare your commitment by joining True Sport.

You can also find us on social media at [@truesportpur](https://twitter.com/truesportpur). Drop us a line and tell us how you plan to activate True Sport.

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SPEAKER (Melissa Sullivan)

Thanks for listening. We hope to have inspired you to play your part to help ensure good sport is happening in communities across Canada. Until next time!

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[Outro music]