

Canadian Sport For Life

# Linking Sport for Life with Management by Values

How values can improve the performance of sport  
organizations

Dina Bell-Laroche



A force for good - that is what most not-for-profit sport organizations set out to become. For that very reason, sport often attracts dynamic, passionate and dedicated people who are as driven to succeed as the coaches and athletes their organization supports. But in their quest to achieve their objectives, leaders in sport often find the pathway riddled with challenges and issues that make the achievement of their vision incredibly challenging, if not impossible. From high staff turnover to volunteer fatigue, the strain is being felt by the over 33,000 sport organizations at all levels of the Canadian sport landscape. Leading a sport organization is not as simple as it once was and many administrators will admit to being ill-equipped to deal with the issues, conflicts and crises that consume their daily working lives.

So what does this mean for sport administrators who are looking to ensure that participants get the most out of their sport experience and that their sport organization thrives throughout the process? This article explores how Management by Values (MBV) can assist sport leaders with not only avoiding the risks that prevent them from achieving their objectives, but more importantly, work towards creating a culture that is people-centered, values-driven and results-oriented.

MBV is a relatively new management philosophy created by internationally renowned management experts, with a view to better manage people in organizations.<sup>1</sup> As sport organizations increasingly focus on performance excellence, there is a parallel need to invest in an organizational framework built on a solid foundation of values. Why? Experience has shown that when individuals' values clash or are incongruent with the core values of organizations, the result is unhappiness, stress and alienation, which in turn, diminish performance and the general well-being of both the individual and the organization.<sup>2</sup> Today, it is widely accepted that an organization that does not

align the values of its employees with its corporate vision is not likely to survive in the long run.<sup>3</sup> When implemented correctly in organizations, MBV can give a company a competitive edge by creating a sustainable, highly motivated, and energetic culture.<sup>4</sup>

If it's true that values are the glue that connects an organization's mission to its vision, then it may be worth considering the role that values currently play in Canadian sport. In Canada, a national, grass-roots driven movement to ensure that sport offers a quality sport experience for all participants is emerging and is adding value to a growing number of significant initiatives in sport. The True Sport Movement is Canada's commitment to good sport and brings together communities, groups and organizations who want to ensure that sport offers a safe, welcoming and rewarding experience for all participants. It is a movement that has aligned itself with Canada's Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) framework, that is athlete-centered, coach-driven and system-supported, and that is having a dynamic impact across the entire sport spectrum.<sup>5</sup>

True Sport is driven by the values that thousands of Canadians say they cared about the most - excellence, inclusion, fairness and fun.<sup>6</sup> In order to bring these values to life, a set of True Sport Principles for Sport were developed. Through these principles, sport organizations can consider how to best organize their programs and services to ensure that volunteers, staff and members receive the best possible sport experience. As a sport club or national organization, sport leaders can use these principles to help make better decisions, to structure their programs, to set priorities, and to more efficiently and effectively manage difficult situations. To date, over 1,500 members have signed onto the True Sport Movement, and that list grows daily.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on MBV, please see *Managing by Values: A corporate Guide to Living, Being Alive, and Making a Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* by Simon Dolan, Salvador Garcia and Bonnie Richley (2006), Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>2</sup> Taken from My Personal Report MBV from the [www.mbvsuite.com](http://www.mbvsuite.com) website

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> Way, R., Balyi, I. & Grove, J. (2007). *Canadian sport for life: A sport parent's guide*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Sport Centres

<sup>6</sup> The Sport We Want Symposium Report, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport July 2003

## How Management Practices have Evolved

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century's global arena, and in the wake of corporate scandals, wars and natural disasters, progress and success are more often being measured by our capacity to manage increased complexity, and also by that which is core to our humanness - our values.<sup>7</sup> It may be helpful to examine how MBV has emerged as a governance model that can assist organizations when dealing with complex situations. MBV goes beyond just publicly stating what an organization's values are. It is much more concrete and practical, and encompasses translating these stated values into plans, decisions, actions, outcomes and experiences. It also means giving values true meaning by positioning them at the core of the organization's vision and mission.<sup>8</sup>

The notion of 'management by values' can perhaps be better understood by contrasting it with 'management by instruction' and 'management by objectives'. The infant years of management science originated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, were informed by military strategy and proposed linear and rational models for decision-making. 'Management by instruction' became a prevailing approach to structuring organizations, supervising subordinates and organizing work processes, and as a management philosophy, worked reasonably well in a world characterized by little risk and uncertainty.<sup>9</sup> Essentially, when the boss said jump, employees would ask "how high".



<sup>7</sup> Taken from My Personal Report MBV from the [www.mbvsuite.com](http://www.mbvsuite.com) website

<sup>8</sup> Dina Bell-Laroche and Rachel Corbett: *Management by values: a new way of doing business in Canadian sport*, 2008: CCES

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

'Management by values' might be described as the third phase of this evolution of management philosophies. As the prevailing environment surrounding organizational decision-making and management has gone from being 'certain' to 'uncertain' and now to 'complex', the earlier management by instruction and management by objectives approaches have been less than adequate. MBV is concerned with developing management systems that are capable of integrating values into organizational strategies, policies and procedures. Dolan, Garcia and Richley (2006) have written extensively about management by values as a strategic leadership tool that can have immensely practical results for organizations, through acknowledging the complexity inherent in the environment; channeling the daily efforts of individuals towards an organization's strategic vision; redesigning organizational culture along more humanistic lines; and including ethical principles into strategic leadership.<sup>11</sup> For instance, when asked why something was done, employees are apt to answer "because it reflects what our organization believes in." MBV provides organizational leaders with an opportunity to tap into a range of management practices taking into account internal considerations and external environments. Rather than dismiss the important perspectives that MBI and MBO have to offer, MBV has decision-makers tapping into and leveraging the positive core that exists within all organizations. And that positive core is often brought to life through organizational values. For more detailed information about Management by Values, you can read an article published by Corbett and Bell-Laroche on [www.sportlaw.ca](http://www.sportlaw.ca).



<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Dolan S.L. and Richley, B. (2006). *Management by values: A new philosophy for new economic order*. In Coats, P. (ed). *Handbook of business strategy*. London, Emerald, pp. 235-238.

## Applying Management by Values in a Sport Organization

There is often a gap between stated values and the values in action by staff, volunteers and members within an organization. For instance, when asked what their organization's values are, employees and volunteers are often left wondering what they might be. Those that do remember the stated values of the organization are hard-pressed to explain how words like "integrity", "respect", and "excellence of effort" or "honesty" translate into measurable outcomes and meaningful actions. And for many more organizations, in the absence of organizational values, employees rely on their personal values to inform their decision-making. This lack of intentionality regarding an organization's values can become a breeding ground for increased conflict, inconsistent results and a disenfranchised culture.

As a way to engage more sport leaders in the dialogue on the importance of values to the achievement of vision, this article focuses on how the True Sport Principles for Sport can be applied daily. In so doing, we hope to bridge the gap between values inaction and values-in-action.

As many grass-roots sport organizations are now beginning to use the LTAD model to organize their programming, each principle offers a number of tips and ideas for each stage of athlete development. As a reminder, LTAD is a framework that has been endorsed by all National Sport Organizations (NSOs), and by a growing list of provincial/territorial and community-based sport organizations as well.

While this article is designed for sport organizations, many of the recommendations and ideas are transferrable to other institutions including pre-schools, day care centres, home care providers, community centres, city-wide programs and sport clubs who believe in providing values-driven sport to children and youth.

## The Timing is Right for MBV

MBV is an approach to management that sport organizations can adopt to help them compete and remain relevant in an increasingly complex environment. Integrating values at all levels reflects the ongoing commitment by sport leaders to create the kind of culture where trust rather than control permeates throughout the organization. And as ethicist John Dalla Costa writes in his book on business ethics: "A global ethic will have validity to apply to everyone, not because it is global but because it is essential, foundational and common to all humans."<sup>12</sup> The degree to which all of us in sport embrace MBV as a way to organize, come together and deliver sport in this country is critical to our success and sustainability as a valuable enterprise within Canadian society.



<sup>12</sup> John Dalla Costa, *The Ethical Imperative: Why Moral Leadership Is Good Business*, Toronto, Harper Collins Canada, 1998

### How Sport Organizations Can Live Their Values

Make your values matter. If your organization doesn't have its mission, vision and values statement, then make a commitment to create one. This becomes your blueprint for action and will help shape your decisions and determine priorities. Here are a few other tips:

- Know your organizational values the way you know your phone number - and ensure that your staff and professional volunteers know them as well. Work towards having them become an integral part of your culture.
- Communicate your values to all members of your organization, and to the general public. Include them on business cards, letterhead, screensavers, internal documents, public relations materials and post them at the entrance to your facility.
- Ensure organizational values are reflected in decision making at all levels including your strategic planning process (Board, Management Team, Committees and Project levels).
- Review your Code of Conduct policy to ensure the language is consistent with your organization's philosophy and values.
- Incorporate your values into your management practices (program evaluations, job descriptions, employee performance appraisals, annual reports, website, volunteer recruitment and in your strategic plan).

State your organization's commitment to your values publicly.

- Have your Board discuss the merit of publicly declaring their support for the True Sport Movement and in so doing pass a resolution to demonstrate your explicit commitment to ensuring a safe, welcoming and rewarding sport environment for all participants
- Visit [www.truesport.ca](http://www.truesport.ca) and click on the declare now button - this can be done prior to or after the Board discusses their commitment to True Sport - but has more power if done after the Board discussion.

Adopt the LTAD model for your sport and structure your programs and services accordingly. This won't be easy but it's the right thing to do and, over time, will become the only way to do business in sport. You'll need to get your Board to approve this commitment to change and to develop shorter and longer term plans accordingly. Visit your NSO for information on how to implement LTAD in your club.

Ensure that your organization has qualified and certified NCCP coaches for each stage of the LTAD continuum. Provide them with the support and ongoing training they need to be the best coaches they can be. Visit [www.coach.ca](http://www.coach.ca) for more information.

Share information on True Sport and LTAD with your members - host information sessions; ensure your coaches and key volunteers understand and support your club's commitment to True Sport and LTAD. Consider hosting a conference that brings people in your community together to talk about the different ages and stages of athlete development. Check out what the Kanata Soccer Club has done at [www.kanatasoccer.com](http://www.kanatasoccer.com) and see how your club can make a difference.

## How Sport Organizations Can Live Their Values (Continued)

Use the True Sport risk management approach when identifying areas of weakness, developing strategies and making important decisions. The following are examples of what you can do when assessing risk on a proactive and planned basis:

- Develop an annual issues management tool that proactively plans for critical risks and develops the key messages for spokespeople
- Develop an interruption management and succession planning tool in case key staff or volunteers leave unexpectedly
- Prepare a Risk Registry that captures your organization's risks, current strategies and potential mitigation treatments
- Have Board members assess risks prior to passing any new motions
- Ensure all policies are reviewed on a regular basis (develop a tracking tool to ensure this doesn't fall through the cracks)
- Include risk assessment on the agenda at the Board, Management Team and Project level
- Integrate risk indicators with performance indicators for annual reviews, evaluation and planning processes
- Have the Board adopt a risk management policy
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have appropriate job descriptions and contracts that are in line with industry standards and that reflect your organization's corporate philosophy and values
- Incorporate an annual risk assessment workshop as part of the organization's annual strategic planning process



### Go For it - Create a Culture that Supports Excellence at all Levels of the Organization

This principle encourages organizations to strive for business and sporting excellence. In order for on the field excellence to emerge, a strong, vibrant and healthy organization is required. From quality programming to creating the kind of culture that attracts and retains highly skilled and competent people, this principle can be brought to life daily by employees and volunteers through their decisions, choices and actions by ensuring:

- the sport organization has a clear vision, mission and a set of values to guide them along the way;
- a solid business plan is in place that is supported by the necessary financial framework and brought to life through the required policies and procedures;
- an explicit commitment to ensure that there is a safe, welcoming and rewarding environment to enable all members to achieve their full potential;
- meaningful and sustainable programs, services and activities that are created with a view to add value for members and clients;
- staff and volunteers who have the ability and knowledge to scan and plan for risks in order to minimize harm and capitalize on opportunities;
- a proactive and professional communications strategy that reaches out to and inspires members by providing clear information on a timely basis;
- and a shared understanding by employees and volunteers of the organization's contribution to society.

In a highly competitive arena such as sport, what distinguishes a good organization from a world-leading organization is the extent to which that organization can not only express its values but more importantly, ingrain them into their culture so that they are shared and lived by all. Use the True Sport Principles publicly to distinguish yourself from others!

### LTAD Specific Tips for Sport Clubs and Community-Based Sport Organizations

#### Active Start & FUNdamentals

For organizations focusing on young children in the Active Start (0-6 years of age) and FUNdamentals (6-9 in boys and 6-8 in girls) stages, you will want to ensure that your program reflects the appropriate training and activities as articulated in your NSO's LTAD framework. For instance, you may find that more experienced coaches are better suited to coach the younger ages with a focus on fun, variety and play-based activities. Furthermore, if you are an organization that specializes in the early LTAD stages, then you will want to ensure that your equipment meets the needs of your participants and that your policies and procedures reflect the highest standards of care.

#### Learning to Train

Typically community-based associations, schools and sport clubs will be focusing on offering programming for children and youth during this stage of athlete development (from 8-11 in girls and 9-12 in boys). Organizations should match their coaches with the age group that is best suited to their competency and personality - not all coaches can or should coach all age groups! If your organization is working with parent volunteers to run the programs, it is imperative to ensure that they are qualified and share the club's philosophy to ensure that the participants continue to have fun and improve in a safe and welcoming environment. Examples to learn from include ensuring all participants have equal playing time, a de-emphasis on keeping score or rankings; reminding coaches about the club's adherence to a skill development approach - even during games; providing all participants with an opportunity to play in different positions - regardless of their skill level; and ensuring coaches not only preach a fair play attitude but also practice one as well.



## Training to Train

Organizations that are offering programs for this stage of development (11-15 for girls and 12-16 for boys) are becoming increasingly specialized. For instance, while you might be a full-service club, when offering programs for this age group, you will want to ensure qualified and competent coaches who are certified by the governing body and who share the LTAD and True Sport philosophies. For instance, while it might be tempting to focus on competitive opportunities, this age group should remain primarily focused on skill training and physical development. You can set the tone by sharing this club philosophy with your members, by ensuring your programming meets your NSO's LTAD requirements, by selecting your coaches based on their ability to reflect this shared approach, and by structuring your business plans accordingly.

## Training to Compete/Win

Most organizations who offer programs for this age group (15 + in girls and 16 + for boys) are in the business of high performance sport. While different sports offer different approaches - some will target athletes at a younger age for national teams while others will encourage athletes to remain with their club - these stages of development require that the organization offers the highest quality of programming by attracting and retaining the most competent and skilled staff and coaches. Ensuring that your organization adheres to excellent governance and human resources standards for not-for-profits will not only help to retain the right people, it will help to minimize the challenges and issues that often distract from achieving results. Working towards creating the kind of culture that values the way success is being achieved will not only help to attract new members to your organization, but will help you to retain them over the long-term.

## Active for Life

Great sport organizations need great people to survive and thrive. Organizations that manage according to their values help to create the kind of culture required to keep people involved in the sport for life. For instance, members who once played competitively may continue as recreational practitioners or volunteer as a committee member. Most clubs, community and sport associations offer a range of program options to appeal to the broadest possible audience, including offering less competitive options for members of all ages. One word of caution - if you offer a full range of programs for all LTAD stages, then ensure that your programs provide value to your members. In some cases, less may mean more in the long run. Either way, a solid business plan, adherence to your organization's values and populating your organization with exceptional people will ensure that you succeed financially and on the field. Both are instrumental in the achievement of your vision.



### Play Fair - Foster an Environment that Promotes Honest Effort

Fair play is a value that not only applies in the world of sport but to business practices as well. For instance, an organization that commits to fairness in the workplace will ensure that the proper procedures and policies are in place, ranging from open and objective hiring practices to transparency in how contracts are awarded. Sport administrators may want to have a professional review their policies to ensure that they reflect their organization's commitment to fairness. For instance, having a clear selection process in place can let your members know that your organization values this principle. When conflict arises, having a system in place to deal with it fairly will pay dividends in the long run. Inevitably, someone will take issue with a decision that your organization makes and it is imperative to have a policy that clearly outlines how your organization deals with disputes. As an example, let your organization's commitment to True Sport make a difference by stating your values publicly. Often disputes can be resolved before they begin by being proactive.

### LTAD Specific Tips for Sport Clubs and Community-Based Sport Organizations

#### Active Start & FUNdamentals

For organizations focusing on young children you'll want to encourage opportunities to teach the value of fair play by modifying or creating rules that are age-appropriate. From sharing of equipment to using teachable moments as ways to promote honesty of effort and fair play, your organization's commitment to developing young participants who value this principle will help to pave the way for future success.

#### Learning to Train

Fair play is the kind of value that transfers easily to other areas of life - ingraining a strong work ethic in these young participants will only help them to reach their full human potential - both on and off the field of play. As an organization that values this principle, you can have participants as well as their parents sign the True Sport Declaration; you can hand out homework requiring participants to work through and discuss with their teammates the importance of playing fair; you can ensure that your referees are provided with a safe and respectful environment by reminding parents, participants and coaches about respecting the official; you can appoint a True Sport liaison to proactively deal with conflict and issues before they reach a crisis point; and the list goes on. Remember that investing heavily in character development at this stage of development will mean a stronger work ethic down the road.

#### Training to Train

Playing fair matters even more as competition increases. Often, administrators find themselves willing to bend the rules to accommodate the pressure of posting favorable results. Rules enforcing geography, age groups, timelines and selection criteria may be compromised for short-term gain unless a club has invested heavily in creating the kind of culture that strives to uphold fair play at all levels of the organization. While there is no easy answer, organizations who walk the talk, who hire qualified, competent and caring people who believe in and reflect the organization's values and who make consistent decisions over time, will be rewarded and appreciated by their membership. Examples includes honoring athletes and coaches for demonstrating their commitment to playing fair, rewarding personal bests, providing opportunities for both men and women to excel, offering programs that are accessible to new Canadians and people with a disability, and publicly demonstrating you're commitment to True Sport. Check out the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's website at [www.cpra.ca](http://www.cpra.ca) for more information on *Everybody Gets To Play™* and *Making All Recreation Safe™*.



## Training to Compete/Win

When we think of great athletes, we think of people who are not only strong performers but people who uphold certain values; values that include fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun. And while we want and support the quest for performance excellence, it is not at excellence at any cost.<sup>13</sup> What is your organization doing to uphold the value of fair play for your athletes, coaches, officials, staff and volunteers? Are you holding up examples of great moments in your sport that bring to life the values of fairness, honesty and integrity? The organization's role is to ensure that the foundation has been laid to create the space for this to happen. For instance, Olympic gymnast Kyle Shewfelt's incredible come-back story a year before the Beijing Olympic Games provided an opportunity for Gymnastics Canada to illustrate how through sport, athletes learn life lessons that can hold them in good stead throughout their lives.

## Active for Life

Attracting people to your sport organizations who share the value of fairness is central to ensuring its ongoing manifestation. An organization that values fair play might create a mentoring program to welcome new members by pairing them with a more experienced member; create an environment that while striving to minimize error, allows people to learn from their mistakes and take responsibility for finding solutions; and offers opportunities for people to advance and grow so they continue to benefit from and add value to the organization they serve.

<sup>13</sup> The Sport We Want Symposium Report, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport July 2003

## Keep it Fun - Maintain a Joyful Culture

Maintaining a joyful environment is central to retaining all participants in sport. When organizations are driven by a culture that cares about ensuring a positive experience, the results are sure to follow as people are more apt to work harder, invest more, and stay involved. From an organizational perspective, this might include having a “dress down day”, celebrating birthdays and special events, organizing an annual picnic, ensuring that your programs adhere to LTAD, ensuring that people are equipped to do their job, offering professional development opportunities and creating the space for flexibility and creativity to emerge. When people are enjoying themselves, they can deal more efficiently with pressure and challenges and are motivated to work towards sustainable solutions.

## LTAD Specific Tips for Sport Clubs and Community-Based Sport Organizations

### Active Start & FUNdamentals

Organizations that specialize in this age group will need to ensure that their programs include a great variety of fun activities to maintain the interest of their young participants. Research by the CCES indicates the importance of fun as the basic reason children engage in sport.<sup>14</sup> By adhering to the LTAD framework which encourages age appropriate skills and drills and by ascribing to the True Sport principles, your organization can set itself apart from others. Remember to provide a safe environment which encourages creative thinking and problem solving through fun, stimulating and age-appropriate challenging activities.

Check with your NSO and [www.phecanada.ca](http://www.phecanada.ca) for tips and ideas on the activities you can offer to ensure that your participants are maximizing the “fun factor”.

### Learning to Train

Keeping it fun means that the required building blocks are in place to ensure a positive and joyful experience for all involved. Ensure that you select the right people for the right job and that they have access to ongoing opportunities for improvement along the way. While simple in concept, it is often challenging to execute without a strategy to make it happen. Communicate your club’s commitment to LTAD so that participants and parents understand the importance of skill development which is central in this stage.

### Training to Train

In order to create a positive environment for staff, volunteers and participants, your organization can commit to a LTAD approach, manage according to your organizational values, and hire and recruit highly skilled individuals who are passionate about your sport and willing to engage in and support the organization’s philosophy. One way to ensure your organization is proactively communicating its commitment to its values is by considering the True Sport principles and how they can be brought to life.

### Training to Compete/Win

High performance athletes compete for the love of sport. They train day in and day out, year after year because of the incredible joy they get from setting and achieving their goals. They also rely on a strong network of friends, mentors, support staff and family to help them realize their full athletic potential. Sport organizations at all levels of the sport enterprise can maximize this potential by ensuring that the joy of sport is recognized, celebrated and valued. A few examples include rewarding personal best achievements, creating and supporting opportunities for continual improvement, and fostering a “fun” working environment.

### Active for Life

Creating and maintaining an enjoyable environment will attract and retain the right type of people to your sport organization. The possibilities are endless to reward, recognize and express gratitude to those who make the running of your organization possible. And this all contributes to creating a fun environment for people to work, volunteer and play.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibed* (pages 132-133)

## Respect Others - Create a Safe, Rewarding and Welcoming Environment

Sport organizations that care about providing a safe, rewarding and welcoming environment will undoubtedly command the respect and loyalty of their staff, volunteers and members. From an organizational perspective, demonstrating respect for others can include having up-to-date policies that strive to exceed national employment standards; embracing diversity; providing staff and volunteers with the knowledge they need to perform their work to the best of their ability; and dealing with conflict and inter-personal tensions in a respectful, open and caring manner. Below you will find a few tips that bring to life your organization's commitment to this principle:

- Ensure that your Board members, key volunteers and staff are trained in how to make ethical decisions.
- Celebrate your organization's adherence to this principle by publicly stating your support for True Sport.
- Ensure that your sport has qualified and certified NCCP coaches for each stage of the LTAD continuum. Provide them with the support and ongoing training they need to be the best coaches they can be.
- Ensure that your coaches, parents and volunteers are trained in harassment and abuse prevention. Check out [www.respectsport.com](http://www.respectsport.com) for more information.
- Ensure that your organization values the contribution that officials make and that this philosophy is promoted throughout. For instance, does your organization have a policy that deals with respecting officials?
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly and in a timely manner. Ensure your policies and procedures are known and understood.
- Share examples of respecting others by featuring success stories in your newsletter and on your website.
- Efficient and effective communication is central to avoiding conflicts and keeping members connected. Rather than inundating your members with emails, consider picking up the phone or hosting a members' night to balance out the space between information sharing and face to face communications.

## LTAD Specific Tips for Sport Clubs and Community-Based Sport Organizations

### Active Start & FUNdamentals

Organizations that specialize in this age group can stand above the rest by fostering a welcoming environment that encourages inclusivity and celebrates diversity. For instance, does your organization have a policy that assists those that can't pay to play? Do you recycle or donate used equipment to those in need? Do you foster a sense of community by respecting a diversity of cultures? Answering yes to these questions will demonstrate your commitment to walk the talk and to bring the principle of Respect Others to life within your organization. Check out the True Sport's Community Sport Fund at [www.truesport.ca](http://www.truesport.ca) to help communities increase inclusion and accessibility for children and youth.

### Learning to Train

At this stage, organizations can invest in their members by ensuring that sport programming not only works on the participant's physical conditioning but also helps to shape attitudes and behaviours. For instance, consider including the True Sport principles as part of your training program by asking the participants to reflect on what these principles mean to them and provide them with opportunities to share and discuss with their teammates. Use "teachable moments" to bring these principles to life both on and off the field of play.

### Training to Train

Organizations can demonstrate respect by mitigating conflict before it begins. For instance, consider how many times your technical director, volunteer coach or administrator needs to field phone calls from irate members requesting special treatment, questioning evaluations or complaining about the quality of coaching. A communications plan that includes proactive messaging, on-going reminders, media training for key spokespeople, and inspiring stories can help to prevent issues and tensions before they arise. Ensuring that your organization deals with conflicts in a fair, transparent and credible manner will also demonstrate your club's adherence to the True Sport principle of Respect Others.

### Training to Compete/Win

At this level, many organizations at different levels of the sport spectrum need to work together to help athletes maximize their full potential. Encouraging honest communication between the many key players in the athlete's life will help to minimize misunderstandings and distractions. For instance, ensuring that key people encourage a holistic approach to athlete recovery will help to avoid burn-out and over-training. Remember that athletes are out to achieve sporting excellence as a function of human excellence and organizations play a key role in maintaining this balance.

### Active for Life

Creating a respectful environment for members, staff and volunteers will help to retain people in your organization. Examples might include reaching out to your members continually via feedback forms or suggestion boxes to ensure a positive environment; rewarding respectful behaviour at all levels of the LTAD stages; providing your participants with the best possible coaches for their stage of development; ensure that you select coaches not only on their technical skills but also because they share your club's philosophy. These ideas and many more tips can be found at [www.truesport.ca](http://www.truesport.ca).



## Stay Healthy - Create an Environment that Contributes to Physical, Emotional & Organizational Wellness

What does organizational wellness mean? Creating a culture that requires its staff and volunteers to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life is an example of promoting this principle. Ensuring that your organization is in a state of wellness means that you are paying attention to the physical and emotional well-being of your employees and volunteers. Ask yourself: “Do I encourage my staff to take time off? Are people fit and relaxed or stressed and overworked? Do I encourage a culture of healthy practices?” Organizations can adopt healthy practices and invest in their human capital through a variety of professional development programs, performance-related incentives and by creating a culture that values this principle.

### LTAD Specific Tips for Sport Clubs and Community-Based Sport Organizations

#### Active Start & FUNdamentals

During these stages, the simplest way to bring this principle to life is to implement the LTAD stages of development. Ensure that each participant has a competent and qualified coach who understands and can deliver programs that are appropriate to the specific needs of these stages. Remember that during these early stages, experts recommend that children and youth participate in a variety of sport and physical activities, as well as daily, unstructured play. An organization that is committed to creating a healthy environment is committed to bridging the gap between espoused values and values-in-use. What is your organization doing to promote organizational wellness? Check out [www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca) for more information and look to your National Sport Organization for direction, advice and guidelines.

#### Learning to Train

At these early stages, participants will begin to form lifelong habits that can either impede or support their long-term physical development. Clubs can help parents make good choices by including Canada’s food guide in their registration kits, reminding parents that the early years are about physical and emotional development rather than competition focused, and adhering to the LTAD framework. Ensure that your organization supports the pursuit of fair and ethical sport, including doping free sport, and encourage parents and participants to sign the True Sport Declaration. Check out [www.cces.ca](http://www.cces.ca) or [www.maryjayne.infor/en](http://www.maryjayne.infor/en) for information related to doping in sport.

#### Training to Train

During this stage, clubs can bring the Stay Healthy principle to life by helping athletes make informed lifestyle and nutrition choices and reminding them to respect their bodies by not using banned substances. Providing athletes and their parents with additional information and workshops to encourage a healthy lifestyle is another example of what exemplary clubs can do. Review [www.bodysense.ca](http://www.bodysense.ca) for important information on nutrition, training and increasing positive self esteem.

### Training to Compete/Win

A healthy mind supports a healthy body. During this stage of development and depending on your sport, administrators should continue with or include mental preparation programs for all athletes. Preparing the mind to compete at the highest of levels requires years of training and practice. Often the difference between success and failure lies in the ability of the athlete to be mind-ready when it counts. Examples of initiatives your club can take include working with a qualified sport psychologist to introduce mental preparation activities for athletes that will enhance problem solving, increase their ability to focus and help them better prepare for competition.

### Active for Life

Clubs that offer a variety of programs to meet the needs of the many ages and stages of LTAD will benefit from encouraging a Stay Healthy mindset amongst its members. From recreational leagues to highly competitive opportunities, participants require strong, healthy bodies to perform to their best of their ability. Great clubs offer a range of workshops to compliment their sport programming, including skill-based training, mental preparation, coaching seminars, and other clinics which contribute to a culture that embraces continual improvement and organizational wellness.





## Give Something Back - Do Something Good for your Community

It's a simple concept with powerful roots. Giving back means connecting to your community by doing something meaningful. From cleaning up a local park to rallying your entire community around True Sport - there are a thousand things that individuals and organizations can do to show they care about the community they live in. True Sport organizations have a culture in place that understands their role in fostering a vibrant community and in helping to build sport as a valued public asset. Here are a few things you can encourage your athletes and members to do by connecting, coordinating, and convening values-driven sport in your organization.

### LTAD Specific Tips for Sport Clubs and Community-Based Sport Organizations

The ideas and tips in this section are applicable throughout each stage of participant development and have been presented as examples of what people can do to bring this principle to life.

#### Participants

- Volunteer your time
- Keep your community green
- Use active transportation to get to your practice or game
- Donate gently used equipment



### Parents

- Encourage your children to give back to their community by donating their time, fundraising for a local initiative or beautifying a local area.
- Invest in your child's leadership skills by encouraging them to help out with younger age groups. Make sure they have the training and support they need. Ensure your referees, managers and coaches are properly trained and have the support they need through mentoring.
- Use active transportation to get to your child's practice or game.
- Help to beautify your club's spaces. Plant some trees. Clean up the park. You may think this is simple but the sport sector depends on a healthy environment in order to function.

### Organizations

Your club has an opportunity to shape the minds as well as the hearts of participants in your care by influencing their ability to give back to their community. As an example, you can encourage your participants to help clean up the park after they've used a field, or by being helping out during a club activity. Encourage families to use active transportation if at all possible to travel to practices and games. Although the gesture may seem small, the environmental impact over time is significant.

As a community-based organization you have a responsibility to care for and add value to your community. For instance, consider applying for a grant to invest in additional infrastructure; strike up a partnership with your local parks and recreation department and see what opportunities exists for collaborative ventures; consider hosting a fundraiser for those in need; donate a portion of your revenues to a charity, bring a can for the local Food Bank, or partner up with suppliers who care about this principle. Check out what the Kanata Soccer Club has done with one of its suppliers at [www.kanatasoccer.com](http://www.kanatasoccer.com).

Honour, recognize and celebrate your key volunteers and showcase their efforts to the larger community. Have a display in your organization that demonstrates your pride in the people who make it possible. Celebrate your organization's successes by recognizing those that make a difference. Think of creative ways to say "thank you" or "job well done".

Encourage your members to think green. For instance, encourage people to take active transportation to their practices and games; provide bags and gloves for athletes and parents to clean up after using a facility or playing in a park. Ensure you recycle as an organization. Think green when you print - print double-sided and use recyclable paper as notebooks. Think of ways to minimize your environmental footprint. Consider the environmental impact when purchasing equipment, supplies, jerseys, etc and ask suppliers what their environmental policies are. You can make a difference!

### Credits

The author wishes to recognize and thank the following individuals for their significant contribution to this article: Rachel Corbett, Joan Duncan, Douglas Duncan, Cathy Haines, Natasha Johnston, Victor Lachance, Joel MacDonald, Richard Way and Danielle Bell.

ISBN # 978-0-9783891-9-2