



PANATHLON DECLARATION ON ETHICS IN YOUTH SPORT

Ghent, 24 September 2004

This declaration represents our commitment to go beyond discussion and to establish clear rules of conduct in the pursuit of the positive values in youth sport.

We declare that:

1. We will promote the positive values in youth sport more actively with sustained effort and good planning.

- In training and competition we will aim for four major objectives in a balanced way: the development of motor (technical, tactical) competence, a healthy and safe competitive style, a positive self-concept, and good social skills. In this we will be guided by the needs of children.
- We believe that striving to excel and to win and to experience both success and pleasure, and failure and frustration, are all part and parcel of competitive sport. We will give children the opportunity to cultivate and to integrate (within the structure, the rules and the limits of the game) this in their performance and will help them to manage their emotions.
- We will give special attention to the guidance and education of children according to those models which value ethical and humanistic principles in general and fair-play in sport in particular.
- We will ensure that children are included in the decision making about their sport.

2. We will continue our effort to eliminate all forms of discrimination in youth sport.

This coheres with the fundamental ethical principle of equality, which requires social justice, and equal distribution of resources. Late developers, the disabled and less talented children will be offered similar chances to practise sport and be given the same professional attention available to early developers, able-bodied, and more talented children without discrimination by gender, race or culture.

3. We recognise and adopt the fact that sports also can produce negative effects and that preventive and curative measures are needed to protect children.

- We will maximise the children's' psychological and physical health through our efforts to prevent cheating, doping, abuse and exploitation, and to help children to overcome the possible negative effects of these.
- We accept that the importance of children's social environment and of the motivational climate is still underestimated. We will therefore develop, adopt and implement a code of conduct with clearly defined responsibilities for all stakeholders in the network around youth sport: sport governing bodies, sport leaders, parents, educators, trainers, sport managers, administrators, medical doctors, physical therapists, dieticians, psychologists, top athletes, children themselves, etc.
- We strongly recommend that the establishment of bodies on appropriate levels to govern this code should be seriously considered.
- We encourage registration and accreditation systems for trainers and coaches.

4. We welcome the support of sponsors and media but believe that this support should be in accordance with the major objectives of youth sport.

- We welcome sponsorship from organisations and companies only when this does not conflict with the pedagogical process, the ethical basis of sport and the major objectives of youth sport.
- We believe that the function of the media is not only to be re-active, i.e. holding the mirror up to the problems of our society, but also to be pro-active, i.e. stimulating, educational and innovative.

5. We therefore formally endorse 'The Panathlon Charter on the Rights of the Child in Sport'.

All children have the right

- to practise sports
- to enjoy themselves and to play
- to live in a healthy environment
- to be treated with dignity
- to be trained and coached by competent people
- to take part in training that is adapted to their age, individual rhythm and competence
- to match themselves against children of the same level in a suitable competition
- to practise sport in safe conditions
- to rest
- to have the opportunity to become a champion, or not to be a champion

All this can only be achieved when governments, sports federations, sports agencies, sports goods industries, media, business, sport scientists, sport managers, trainers, parents and children endorse this declaration.

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