

**Attack on**



*A Changing Landscape*

Public Forum

# Proceedings

February 5, 2015

The University of Winnipeg

## Executive Summary:

On February 5, 2015 diverse and interested parties in the sport community convened at the University of Winnipeg for the “Attack on Sport –A changing Landscape” public forum. Representatives included athletes, teachers, coaches, administrators, officials, students and academics to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that amateur sport faces in today’s changing times. Key note addresses were presented by Dan Lett , Journalist with the Winnipeg Free Press and Paul Melia, President and CEO of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport. An invited panel of experts were also invited to bring commentary and included: Dr. Sandra Kirby, Professor Emeritus – The University of Winnipeg, Jeff Powell, General Manager – Canadian Centre for Sport – Manitoba, Mr. Jeff Palamar, Legal counsel with Taylor McCaffrey, Alex Gardiner, former National Team Coach in Athletics, Sheldon Reynolds, Coach Educator with Sport Manitoba.

Glen Bergeron presented a “set the stage” powerpoint presentation outlining the most recent headlines in the print media. Much of the headlines were negative in nature and dealt with issues such as hazing, violence, abuse of officials, performance enhancing drugs, fair play and concussions. Also profiled were some of the good news stories that are less frequently highlighted in the media including the stance taken by athletes at the Sochi Olympics regarding gay rights and the message delivered by Clara Hughes on her cross country tour to create awareness for mental health and the world wide influence that the Right to Play movement has on disadvantaged children.

The stage was set to begin the deliberations on three questions that were to be the focal point of group discussions following the presentations. Those questions are:

Is sport just a microcosm of society?

What is (are) the solution(s) to the problems facing sport and who needs to be involved?

Where should we go from here?

Dan Lett spoke challenged us to think if we were really practicing the true values of sport - that of fair play. He gave examples of teams “shortening their benches” simply to win. He asked the question why sport was not adhering to the Principles of Fair Play and inclusivity. He mentioned that this new era of social media and cameras on our phones has changed to whole accountability piece. The media are now in touch with the happenings almost on a moment’s notice.

We should not be asking the question “why are things getting worse”, instead we should be asking “why aren’t things getting any better”. There are many strategies out there to make sport a better place but it seems as though it is not filtering down to the grassroots.

“We also need to find the people who disagree with these ideas and challenge them in order to make changes to the current system.”

Paul Melia, CEO and President of the Canadian Centre for Ethics and Sports (CCES) wanted to make it clear that as an athlete and a coach, he certainly participates in sport to win. He asks; should we have policies and procedures for sport so that we can combine competition and fair play?

In a poll taken among Canadians, 50% of people said they had a negative sport experience. These experiences will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Sport is facing significant challenges when it comes to issues including Drug abuse; Violence in sport; Parent Behaviour; Weak sport governance; Negative professional sport values and universal access to sport.

The Power of Sport needs to focus on the good. It's not any sport experience, its good sport experience that makes a difference. In order to change something, the focus cannot be placed on changing the resisters but rather, the focus should be on changing the minds of early adopters.

The job of the Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport is to be the conscience of sport, protect sport from doping, support youth sports and advocate for fair, safe play. It does this by promoting the seven principles of the True Sport movement.

Responses invited from five expert panel members:

**Sandra Kirby**, Sociologist and Professor Emerita at The University of Winnipeg, suggests that we are all part of the solution. Notwithstanding that some issues are clearly legal concerns, we all should be aware of the "Grey zone" when we witness behavior that could be seen as inappropriate. Coaches, parents, officials and athletes themselves are all part of the solution. She also emphasizes that we are there to protect the athlete and not the reputation of the sport or sport organizations.

**Jeff Palamar**, a lawyer and partner with Taylor McCaffrey law firm suggests that the law is created by us to adjudicate in times of conflict. It is up to us to determine what those laws are and to change them as we see fit. The difficulties we face is the dichotomy between the laws and govern sport and those that govern society in general. At what point to does on cross over the other? How and why do we accept some actions in sport that we would not tolerate in society in general?

**Alex Gardiner**, former National Team Athletics Coach, relayed a story regarding circumstances where the Canadian Men's 100 meter relay team was disqualified due to a technical error of marginally crossing the lane marker. He wanted to comment on the fact that this was likely the biggest event in the lives of these athletes and although the infraction probably occurred on numerous occasions during the competition, his athletes accepted the ruling with dignity and class. The spin off to their response to this very disappointing set of events was the example set for fans and aspiring athletes who shared their disappointment but who also appreciated the lesson learnt.

**Jeff Powell**, General Manager of the Canadian Sport Center – Manitoba, is suggesting that we need to keep as many of our young athletes involved in a wide variety of sports as possible. A study that was completed stated that the single largest reason for success of an athlete at the national level was the number of sports they played. Athletes are trained to be so focused on one sport that it becomes their

identity which makes it much more difficult to diversify as an athlete. This single minded focus leads to early dropouts and a diminishing base of athletes from which to choose when considering elite level athletes who can compete on the international stage.

**Sheldon Reynolds**, the Coach Education Coordinator with Coaching Manitoba, is very optimistic about the steps taken by sport organizations in Manitoba. He is a strong believer that sports are a social currency for life. Given the impact of inactivity has on our youth, we can't afford to make a mistake with how sport is delivered to our youth. We need to start highlighting the good things that are happening in sport to attract people back into sport.

The audience was invited to participate in group discussions to address the three questions as listed above. Comments were made on both sides of each question and can be found in the full document. Three general statements can be made:

- For good or bad, sport is a part of society
- We are all responsible to fix the problems facing sport
- We are all responsible to affect change

### **Intentionality....**

The concept of "intentionality" was commented upon by a number of presenters and members of the audience. Intentionality means to clearly identify the goals and objectives that we want to achieve and to make each decision, action or policy and "intentional" step towards those goals and objectives. Intentionality gives direction, reason and purpose for everything we say and do.

## Introduction:

2015 is the year of sport. What are the challenges facing Sport?

Every day, in the media, there is yet another attack on sport. Be it hazing issues in hockey; the suspension of the Hockey team for alleged sexual harassment; athletes falling from grace due to doping infractions; on ice brawls in hockey; parent over exuberance; criminal charges against two young hockey players for assaulting a referee; or the ever growing awareness of the impact of concussions.

Missing in all of this is the positive impact sport has on our children and society in general. The impact of the right to play movement in third world countries; the impact that Clara Hughes has brought to the discussion on mental health with her cross Canada tour; the social impact that sport played on gay rights at the Sochi Olympics; or the demonstration of fair play shown at the Olympic cross country ski competitions in Sochi when Justin Wadsworth a Canadian cross country ski coach provided a Russian skier with a replacement ski so that he could finish the race.

A couple of comments come to mind:

“If we don’t change the culture of sport than someone is going to change it for us”

“You change the rules or someone is going to change them for you”

### **Is it time for some public dialogue on this issue?**

The Gupta Faculty of Kinesiology and Applied Health at The University of Winnipeg hosted a public forum to discuss the changing landscape of sport. The target audience included: Coaches, Sport Administrators, Media, Physical Education Teachers and administrators, University Kinesiology students, Sport Sociologists and others.

The objectives of the forum were to:

- Create an awareness of the challenges facing sport
- Acknowledge the positive impact of sport
- Identify strategies to enhance to positive over the negative impact of sport
- Mobilize action and change in Manitoba

## Organizing Committee:

Dr. Glen Bergeron PhD CAT(C) - Associate Dean, Gupta Faculty of Kinesiology and Applied Health

David Fitzpatrick - Dean, Gupta Faculty of Kinesiology and Applied Health

Sandra Kirby PhD – Member Emerita – The University of Winnipeg

Paul Melia – President and CEO Canadian Centre for Ethics and Sport

Penny Paul – Atlas Medic Representative

Jeff Powell – General Manager, Canadian Sport Centre Manitoba

Gary Swanson – Community Resource Coordinator, The City of Winnipeg

Veralyn Warkentin – Assistant to the Dean, Gupta Faculty of Kinesiology and Applied Health

Jennifer Martins, MS, ATC, CAT (C) – Media Relations Coordinator

Keynote Speakers Biographies:

**Dan Lett – Journalist, Winnipeg Free Press**

Dan has worked at bureaus covering every level of government – from city hall to the national bureau in Ottawa.

He has had bricks thrown at him in riots following the 1995 Quebec referendum, wrote stories that helped in part to free three wrongly convicted men, met Fidel Castro, interviewed three Philippine presidents, crossed several borders in Africa illegally, chased Somali pirates in a Canadian warship and had several guns pointed at him.

He has also been fortunate enough to be a two-time nominee for a National Newspaper Award, winning in 2003 for investigations.

Other awards include the B’Nai Brith National Human Rights Media Award and nominee for the Michener Award for Meritorious Public Service in Journalism.

**Paul Melia – Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport**

President, CEO, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, Paul Melia plays a variety of essential roles at the CCES. His responsibilities include the administration of Canada’s doping control program and working with governments and sport organizations to implement a national ethics strategy for amateur sport.

A graduate of the University of Ottawa with a Masters degree in Health Administration, Mr. Melia has used his extensive knowledge and expertise in the development and implementation of public awareness, education and social change campaigns for a variety of health and social issues.

He currently serves as President and Chair of the True Sport Foundation. He is the former Chief of the Tobacco Programs Unit at Health Canada, the past President of the Association of National Anti-Doping Organizations, and the former Regional Vice-President of In-Touch Survey Systems.

Panel Presenters (bio):

**Alex Gardiner – Head Coach of Canadian Track & Field Team at 2012 Olympics**

An NCCP level 5 and Master Coach, Alex Gardiner's area of focus has been coaching and athlete performance through leading edge research, education and team integration. His goal has ways been to provide a comprehensive, world best program in support of podium finishes. He has had the opportunity and privilege of working with Canada's best coaches, scientists and medical professionals for more than 20 years.

He was Head Coach of the Canadian Track & Field Team from 2009-12, including the 2012 Olympics; he has been National Team advisory on summer sports for the Canadian Olympic Committee's 'Own the Podium,' and was director of the Canadian Sport Centre Manitoba from 1997-2002. Alex is back at the University of Manitoba working with the Track Team and Football Program, having been Head coach of Bison Track & Field from 1984-1992. He began his coaching career as a high school coach at Murdoch McKay Collegiate in Transcona. Alex grew up in Silver Heights (St. James); he and his wife, Sandra Rettie, have four children.

**Dr. Sandra Kirby – Professor Emerita of Sociology, University of Winnipeg and former Olympian**

Professor Emerita, University of Winnipeg, is a sport scientist and author of 10 books, including her most recent, *Playing it Forward: 50 Years of Women and Sport in Canada* (Demers, Greaves, Kirby and Lay). She is an internationally respected writer and advocate on child protection in sport and is a founding board member of the new Safe Sport International (SSI). Dr. Kirby is an Olympian (1976), a rowing coach at Winnipeg Rowing Club and a cross-country ski racer with Team Windchill.

**Jeff Palamar LLP – Taylor McCaffrey Law**

Jeff Palamar LLP is a partner in the Winnipeg law firm Taylor McCaffrey. He is listed among the peer-selected National Post's "Best Lawyers in Canada", and practices primarily in the areas of labour relations, employment law and human rights, as well as administrative and sport law.

His work includes advice and advocacy on all aspects of the workplace, including employment contracts, policy manuals, hiring, discipline and dismissal of employees, workplace safety and health matters, human rights, discrimination and harassment claims, and collective bargaining.

Jeff receives appointments and serves as an adjudicator under the Canada Labour Code, and as an arbitrator for the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada. He is the Chair of the Board for Sport Manitoba, and also the Provincial Chair of KidSport Manitoba. He has also served as Team Canada's Ombudsperson with the Canadian Paralympic Committee at the Paralympic Games in Beijing, Vancouver/Whistler, London and Sochi.

### **Jeff Powell – General Manager of Canadian Sports Centre**

General Manager of the Canadian Sport Centre Manitoba and born and raised in Winnipeg, Jeff is an Olympian and World Champion rower. As a provincial, national and world champion, and national team coach, Jeff is committed to promoting the cause of the highest performance athletes and the systems that support them. Jeff began rowing in 1996 becoming a two-time world champ in 2002 and 2003 when he won the gold medal as part Canada's men's eight team in Milan, Italy and Seville, Spain respectively. He also competed at the Athens Olympics in 2004.

Jeff holds a B.A. (honours) in Economics from the University of Manitoba and a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Western Ontario. In addition to his time in sport, he has worked at Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Manitoba Department of Finance.

In his free time, Jeff enjoys cooking and reading. Jeff and his wife, Rebecca, chose Winnipeg to raise their two young daughters along with their golden retriever, Molson.

### **Sheldon Reynolds – Coach Education Coordinator, Coaching Manitoba**

Sheldon Reynolds is Coach Education Coordinator at Coaching Manitoba. He is a former Physical Education specialist in the Pembina Trails School Division with over 30 years experience in community club and school system coaching.

He was an official in the Winnipeg minor basketball association. Sheldon facilitates coaching courses in the National Coaching Certification Program and is an advocate of Sport Canada's Long Term Athlete Development Program and as such is an avid participant in The Active for Life stage.

His most recent accomplishments are completing Ironman Wisconsin in 2010 and the New York Marathon in 2013. He is currently training for the World Age group Triathlon Championships in Chicago in September, 2015.

#### Guests (Jurisdictions represented):

Winnipeg Community Sport Alliance	University of Manitoba
City of Winnipeg	University of Winnipeg, Coaches and Athletes
Sport Manitoba	Manitoba High School Athletics Association
Winnipeg Community Sport Alliance	Manitoba Football Officials Association
Hockey Winnipeg	University of Winnipeg, Kinesiology Department
University of Winnipeg, Kinesiology Students	Vincent Massey Collegiate



Setting the Stage: (Dr. Glen Bergeron – Moderator)

What are the challenges faced by sport today? What makes it a changing landscape? Should we or should we not be concerned? Should there be a call to action? What are we hearing and seeing on radio and television or reading in the print media? It is any indication, these are just a sampling of the headlines found in the print media:

- ***“Hockey dad got ‘out of control”***
  - *“Convicted of assault in arena attack; harassed woman who intervened”*
    - By: Mike McIntyre, Winnipeg Free Press, Posted: 12/13/2011
- ***“Women’s hockey team suspended after hazing”***
  - Winnipeg Free Press Posted: 01/04/2013
- ***“Men’s rugby club at Dalhousie University suspended over hazing complaint”***
  - The Canadian Press – Online Edition, By: Alison Auld, Posted: 09/30/2014
- ***“[Hockey] coach resigns; team issues apologies for hazing incidents”***
  - Posted: 11/03/2011
- ***“Attack on hockey ref nets jail time”***
  - *“Official forced to give up sport”*
    - By: Mike McIntyre, Winnipeg Free Press – Print Edition Posted: 05/03/2012
- ***“City police checking in on kids' hockey this winter”***
  - Winnipeg Free Press - Online Edition Posted: 10/24/2014
- ***“Alleged assault on soccer ref leads to 15-year ban”***
  - Winnipeg Free Press – Online Edition By: Oliver Sachgau, Posted: 07/7/2014
- ***“Thunder Bay police charge U of O hockey captain and teammate with sexual assault”***
  - By: Shaamini Yogaretnam
- ***“Soccer player guilty of assault during game”***
  - *“Justice officials say case sets Manitoba precedent”*
    - Brandon Sun – Online Edition By: Mike McIntyre, Posted: 01/13/2012
- ***“Soccer-assault case overturned”***
  - *Judge rules 2009 incident not criminal but part of game*
    - Winnipeg Free Press – Print Edition By: Mike McIntyre, Posted: 10/17/2013
- ***“Ex-Bison admits performance enhancing drug use”***
  - *“Coach thinks desire to make CFL probably led to player's steroid use”*
    - Winnipeg Free Press – Print Edition By: Paul Wiecek, Posted: 08/29/2014
- ***“Top sprinters fail drug tests”***
  - *“Trio of world's best puncture myth sport has cleaned up act”*
    - Winnipeg Free Press – Print Edition By: Eddie Pells and Pat Graham, Posted: 07/15/2013
- ***“The concussion conundrum”***
  - *“Awareness is improving, but exactly how the brain is damaged remains a medical mystery”*

- Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION By: Patrick Blennerhassett, Posted: 07/5/2014
- ***“High School Football Tied to Brain Changes, Even Without Concussion”***
  - “Small study suggests that blows to the head in a typical season might alter brain”
    - Health Day – Online Edition By: Mary Elizabeth Dallas, Posted: 12/1/2014
- ***“When it's a criminal matter - Parents, coaches, players must understand the law”***
  - “Where do you draw the line between hockey penalty and criminal penalty?”
    - Winnipeg Free Press – Print Edition By: Dan Lett, Posted: 07/31/2014
- ***“Consistency of enforcement key to curbing hockey violence”***
  - Winnipeg Free Press – Print Edition By: Dan Lett, Posted: 04/23/2014

Traditionally, hockey has handed down suspensions for physically abusing officials that range from part of a season, an entire season or, in some extreme cases, multiple seasons. Hockey at all levels has, for the most part, drawn a line in the sand that dictates on-ice infractions should be penalized via the rule book and not the Criminal Code.

- ***“Violence not right road to hockey success”***
  - Winnipeg Free Press – Print Edition By: Dan Lett, Posted: 10/4/2013

Pro-fighting voices, including the NHL Player's Association, argue that fighting is actually the only way to curb dangerous behaviour like hits from behind, head shots and reckless stickwork. Fighting is a deterrent, or a punishment, for anyone who takes violent liberties with the skilled players.... Fighting isn't a deterrent. It's the final stage in the escalation of hockey violence. More importantly, it's an important signal to young players and their families that violence is necessary for success.

Post note:

There is no shortage of newspaper headlines such as these; they are an almost everyday occurrence. It would seem to be that society is reaching a threshold of tolerance in that the value of sport is being challenged. Participation in sport is on the decline at the very time when it is needed most to combat our sedentary culture fueled by television, video games and social media. On the other hand, there seems to be a desensitization occurring around what happens in “sport entertainment”. Our professional hockey league markets the rough and tough style of hockey including the “hand to hand” combat. Ultimate fighting is one of the fastest growing forms of entertainment in the world. It is nice to see professional baseball take the stand that it has on performance enhancement drugs and the hope would be that other professional teams will take a similar stance, however there continues to be a culture of improper use and perhaps abuse of over the counter drugs such as pain killers and sleeping pills that have lead to tragic consequences. Concussions continue to be a serious problem. Lives have been forever changed and some lost due to concussion. There is mounting evidence that even those who recover from the short term effects of concussion are susceptible to the long term life altering effects of conditions such as Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). There is much more to learn about concussions. In the meantime we need to take a cautious approach and protect our athletes.

On the other hand, there are many positive stories in sport that inspire us; that make us feel proud; that give us hope in humanity. Here are a few:

- **NHLers must take stance on gay rights**
  - High-profile Olympic athletes should stand up to Putin
    - Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION [Gary Lawless](#) Posted: 08/8/2013
- **Winning at the game of life**
  - Hughes in hometown to champion mental-health issues
    - Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION By: Oliver Sachgau Posted: 06/15/2014
- **Right to Play**
  - help children in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and North America
  - 16,400 volunteer Coaches reach one million children, weekly

Sport does have a place in our society. It does have the **power** and **responsibility** to be a positive influence on our children, we as parents, our coaches and our leaders. Sport has a global reach that has the capacity to touch each and every person. We can and must choose to make that touch one that adds to the quality of who we are as human beings.

#### Keynote Address - Dan Lett:

Dan Lett has been an athlete, hockey referee, hockey convener, hockey coach, and a parent to an athlete, so has experiences many different dimensions of sport. His son was playing on his grade 8, basketball team and played a team in the championship that had 17 players on it. Only 6 of those 17 kids played during the game, 11 sat on the bench the whole time. Is this part of the fair play policy? What are we doing/saying to our kids by allowing this to happen? The problem stems from ignorance on the front lines about fair play. At higher levels there are great ideas and opportunities available but the ideas are not getting through to the development level.

When it comes to reporting events in the media, there are a lot of things that go on that we never hear about. There are many incidents of referee abuse in hockey every year; how come we don't hear about them? However in the last few years there has been an increase in the amount of reporting due to the invention of cell phone cameras. It has increased the attention of media and police because a lot more things are caught on personal camera phones.

There was a story recently about a team who intentionally lost in order to play an easier team, how is this still happening in sport? We should not be asking the question "why are things getting worse", instead we should be asking "why aren't things getting any better". We have knowledge, ideas, plans, organizations etc. however these resources are not being used with some coaches, athletes and parents. We have to get this information out to a broader range of people.

There is still the belief that you have to spend a lot of money to make it anywhere in sport and that you need to play/ train 365 days a year. Most people are still not aware of the information and resources available. The people that do know the right information don't seem to hang around with people who are doing things the incorrect way. We therefore need to start asking people to explain why they are

doing things and hold them accountable for their decisions and actions. We cannot be afraid to go against the grain and challenge the system. People need to be able to justify their decisions, example: why we are not letting more kids participate in sports. We need to get the message down to the front lines. We also need to find the people who disagree with these ideas and challenge them in order to make changes to the current system.

#### Keynote Address - Paul Melia:

Paul Melia has been a coach for tennis and hockey with his own kids and therefore has experienced firsthand the issues Dan Lett talked about. As a coach or athlete himself, when he participates in sports, he's "in it to win it". Therefore his question is; should we have policies and procedures for sport so that we can combine competition and fair play?

In order to change something, the focus cannot be placed on changing the resisters but rather, the focus should be on changing the minds of early adopters. This is called the "Diffusion of Change" and this is how the smoking industry was able to change over the last 20 years.

The Power of Sport needs to focus on the good. It's not any sport experience, its good sport experience that makes a difference. The media tends to highlight the bad events however we have to pay attention to the "good sport". This is a difficult concept because sport is never neutral as there is always one winner and one loser. After a poll was taken among Canadians, 50% of people said they had a negative sport experience. These experiences will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Sport has the opportunity to bring joy into a person's life, make friends, improve skills, and create lasting life lessons. Kids need to have a good experience to stay in sport because if they have a negative experience they will drop out. An example of this is when a coach calls time out with 1 minute left in a 4-5 year old hockey game to kill the clock. The coach then brags about how smart he is for securing his one goal lead. Is this the definition of good sport?

The job of the Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport is to be the conscience of sport, protect sport from doping, support youth sports and advocate for fair, safe play. The CCES is fighting against the following negatives challenges facing sport:

- 1) Doping – Athletes feel that there is a lot at stake therefore it is worth the risk of getting caught.  
RESPONSE: Anti-doping organizations are working in full force to try and keep performance enhancement out of sport.
- 2) Violence – The rules of sport allow for what is considered tolerable. Ex: concussions.  
RESPONSE: Rule changes and proper return to play procedures are being created for all players and sports. However lawsuits down the road seem to be the main concern, not the player's health and safety.
- 3) Parents Behaviour – Verbal and physical abuse of coaches, referees, players and other parents are seen in all sports at all levels.  
RESPONSE: Parental support for the child has a huge impact on their experience and therefore it needs to be utilized in a more positive manner. There is a lot of effort going into this movement however there still is a lot more to be done.

- 4) Weak Sport Governance – The majority of sport is volunteer run therefore there is no structure or accountability within organizations.  
RESPONSE: Coach training programs have been developed to help with this problem.
- 5) Negative Professional Sport Values – Professional sport is run as business first and sport second.  
RESPONSE: People need to realize the difference in levels of sport and stop applying the professional sport model to community sport.
- 6) Universal Access to Sport – There is still limited opportunities for underdeveloped communities to participate in sport.  
RESPONSE: Creating good sports programs needs to be intentional in all communities. That will allow for building character in kids, strengthen the community and increase the amount of kids participating in sport.

The more people we can attract to sport, the broader base we have to achieve greater success. We need to “Fill the Playground” to “Own the Podium”.

*CCES Promotes the following 7 Principles of True Sport*

- Go for it (play to win)
- Play fair
- Respect others
- Keep it fun
- Staying healthy
- Giving back
- Including everyone

Balance between these 7 principles creates a good sport experience for everyone. If one becomes more important than another, it throws off the dynamics of sport. Changes have to start from the ground and work their way up. Good sport can have a positive impact on kids however a recent poll suggests we don't have that now. The sport we currently have is not what Canadians want. This needs to change because sport has the opportunity to build great people.

Panelist Address - Dr. Sandra Kirby:

Sandra Kirby believes that we all are part of the solution when it comes to protecting children in sport. We should all want everyone to be involved in creating safe sport. How?

1) **Using the Grey Zone** – The grey zone is the area between good behaviour and unacceptable behaviour. For example, when we are coaching and we see other coaches behaving badly, it is our job to go talk to them. Perhaps they are unaware of what counts as good behavior. Perhaps they can benefit from our intervention. If we don't use the grey zone and do some corrective work, then we are not helping all of us to be better coaches. We all have a collective responsibility to raise the standard of behavior and we can do that by helping each other. All coaches can work together to be better coaches. In reporting sexually abusive behavior, it is not the task of the coaches to determine

if a behavior constitutes abuse. That can be left to the law. The coaches are tasked with helping athletes and that requires us to provide a safe place for the practice of sport.

2) **Who are we Protecting?** – We want sport to be safe for all. However, when it isn't, our priority is to ensure that the athletes are safe from those who might harm them: others in sport (e.g. abusive coaches or other authority figures; peer athletes); and others outside of sport (e.g. abusive peers, spectators, strangers). Our second priority is to protect those who work in sport (the coaches, volunteers and so on). Only then should our concern be to protect the sport organization.

Overall there are many approaches to help protect children in sport. No solution is more important than another. They are all equally important in the sense that one solution will work in one situation but not in another.

Panelist Address - Jeff Palamar:

As a lawyer it is not a lawyer's job to assess good/bad or right/wrong. The law is a system that has been put in place and if we don't like it then we should fix it. There is going to be disputes in life and it's the legal system's job to solve the disputes and create resolutions. Sport causes disputes naturally and that is okay. The legal system can then be used to solve disputes in a fair way.

Sport does parallel life experiences therefore when something happens in sport, should it affect your life? (Ex: losing your job because of something that happened at a game) On the other hand, whose job is it to protect the athletes? Where is the line drawn between a sports play and criminal assault? It is the law's job to figure out the answers to these questions. The law is a product of what we make it therefore if we don't like it, we need to fix it. We can't put the blame on the media for this. Laws are hard to write so it will take time to evolve them in order to include extraneous circumstances. (Ex: should professional athletes be governed by labor laws because sport is their job?) It is a natural progression that law should be a part of sport.

Panelist Address - Alex Gardiner:

Story about Atlanta Olympics – The Canadian team was the underdog and not expected to beat the powerhouse Americans. However the Canadian team overcame adversity and injury with a total team effort.

Story about London Olympics – the Canadian 4 x 100 relay team did not have the fastest runners in the race and therefore knew they needed to make up the time during the transitions. They finished 3<sup>rd</sup> which was a big achievement for them. They unfortunately had their medal taken away from them because of disqualification. A judge said that a Canadian runner stepped on the line during the transition of the baton. They challenged the call because it's not possible to see a centimeter step on the line with 14 people in the transition zone. They lost the appeal and were devastated by this sudden turn of events. Despite the sad outcome, there was a positive result. The way the team handled the loss as true Olympians won them the respect of the Canadian people and especially those young aspiring athletes who looked up to them as role models.

#### Panelist Address - Jeff Powell:

Jeff Powell spoke to the fact that issues are created in sport when there are imbalances. As an athlete ages, the sport becomes more important to them personally. It therefore becomes more difficult to give up the sport when it has become part of who they are. It is believed that we will not be as competitive in the upcoming Olympics because total participation numbers has decreased tremendously over the last few years. There is an impression that the best players are picked at younger levels and are developed over the years. This idea is incorrect because studies show that there is no way to know who will be a professional athlete at such a young age. For this reason we need to keep as many athletes involved with sport for a longer period of time, in order to develop their skills.

A study that was completed stated that the single largest reason for success of an athlete at the national level was the number of sports they played. We therefore can't have self-centered goals, we need to work together to achieve this outcome. By putting the emphasis on the wrong points, it is hurting our countries achievements in the long run.

#### Panelist Address - Sheldon Reynolds:

Pembina Trails School Division was the first district in Winnipeg where all coaches took part in a respect in sport education event. As a referee, he has seen many leagues adopt the fair play principles. Sports are a social currency for life. Good coaches build better people and with an epidemic of obesity and lack of activity in our populations, we can't afford to make a mistake with the plan.

After sporting events, what will the stories be? We need to start highlighting the good things that are happening in sport to attract people back into sport.

#### Provincial and National Resources:

Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES)

- a. Club excellence program (<http://www.cces.ca/en/clubexcellence>)
- b. Code for Prohibited Conduct on Sport (<http://www.cces.ca/en/prohibitedconduct> )
- c. True Sport Movement ([www.truesport.ca](http://www.truesport.ca).)

Sport Manitoba/Coaching Manitoba

- a. Respect in Sport (<http://www.coachingmanitoba.ca/page.php?id=200> )
- b. Make Ethical Decisions (<http://www.coachingmanitoba.ca/page.php?id=107> )

### Breakout Session:

Participants in the forum were assigned to groups and were asked to discuss three questions:

1. **Is sport just a microcosm of society?**
2. **What is (are) the solution(s) to the problems facing sport and who needs to be involved?**
3. **Where should we go from here?**

**Presented below are the comments generated by the discussions in the various groups:**

#### ***Question 1 – Is sport just a microcosm of society?***

##### **YES:**

- It has been discussed that behaviour patterns in sport are similar to those seen in society however they can be completely different as well.
- They have the same values as both good and bad can be seen in sport. People will utilize the same behaviors in sport that they use in regular life.
- Abuse on many different levels can be seen in sport as well as in society.
- Is sport being utilized for fun or to build character?
- Once an athlete is caught using performance enhancing drugs, are they more susceptible to use again because there is no punishment for using?
- Fixing sport is a responsibility that will assist with fixing society.
- The legal system deals with issues in society as well as the issues seen in sports.
- Fighting in sports is displayed so that society is lead to believe it is ok to emulate.
- The level at which athletes play at does make a difference for competition and the impact it is making. TV/media serves to carry over ideas from the sporting world into society.
- Society then looks/highlights the media releases as what is the norm for society to emulate.
- Financial factors are also seen in both society and sport.
- Economic status, funding, availability, diversity are key factors that will affect an athlete's participation.

##### **NO:**

- The behaviour in sport can be completely different from the regular environment.
- Some behaviours in sport are acceptable but would not be in society.
- The sporting environment allows some people to take advantage of the opportunity to get away with violence/cause problems.
- The poor in society lack access to programs and services offered.
- Parents will allow coaches to do things they wouldn't allow a teacher to do.
- The society of sport seems to be more accepting to the use of banned substances as punishment is different for those in society.
- Violence is seen in sports and society however with sports it is a channel to utilize in a different way.



- Why is trash talking acceptable in sports when it is a negative behaviour that is not tolerated in society?
- Pro athletes are held to a different standard than others in society and amateur athletes look up to these role models for what they do both on and off the field.
- For this reason, the character of pro athletes is becoming more important rather than just athletic ability.
- Cheating in sport does not have the same implications that cheating in society would cause.
- The behaviours seen in sports emulate societal views as well as pro sports views.

**General commentary to question #1:**

- Sport does provide mentorship to help athletes cope with disappointments in their life.
- Ethics of sport has the potential to be better however it needs to constantly change and evolve with the time.
- We need to start using sports to create new solutions to the problem.
- Sports demonstrate more positive values that can be utilized in life.
- Sport can be utilized to uplift and increase self-confidence however where is the line drawn between too much? (playing one sport 6-7 days a week).
- Kids will see how their parents react to sport and adapt/inherit their beliefs and actions from them. This creates a fine line between good and bad.
- Sport needs to be used and the vehicle for change because it will be able to affect societal changes on a small scale.

<b>For good or bad, sport is a part of our society</b>
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**Question 2 – What is (are) the solution(s) to the problems facing sport and who needs to be involved?**

**Pessimism:**

- There is not solution and if there is, it's a long time away.
- We still have Neanderthal practices.
- The problem is very complex therefore the answer is very complex.
- Everyone will have different ethical and moral reasoning therefore will be hard to pinpoint on one.
- We need to identify the issues, but is a very long list.
- Everyone likes to win.

**Athletes:**

- Is there only one road to the Olympics/ pro sports?
- When faced with a barrier on that road they must choose to continue on or leave sport.

- Tough lessons need to be given even at older ages in sport, no one is untouchable.
- Each individual athlete needs to learn about these issues and take responsibility for their actions.
- Retention rates could be used as a measurement asking the athletes experience not their parents to measure.
- Their feedback is most important to keeping future athletes interested in participating in sports.

#### **Parents:**

- Parents need to learn that they cannot live vicariously through their kids.
- Poor athlete performance cannot be placed on others because that pressure will cause the athlete to leave the team.
- Parents should be banned from parks however they will be the last to buy into this idea.
- If they are too involved, may be responsible for causing health issues down the road. Parents are most concerned about the money not the athletes.
- They need to learn about athlete burn out and how it may affect their child.
- Parents need to be a model for their child so that if they see their parents acting well, they will so the same.
- Parents need to become more educated about what is right for the athlete at any level.
- They need to be aware of what happens behind the bench and learn to respect it.
- Parents cannot have their own agenda; they need to look towards the future for their child not live in the “now”.

#### **Coaches:**

- The younger upcoming coaching generations need to focus on education and coaching excellence programs.
- If they are too involved, may be responsible for causing health issues down the road.
- Are there too many coaches with different ideas? Certification, education and regulation for every coach should be a focus.
- Coaches need to be a model for their athletes so that if they see their coaches acting well, they will so the same.
- Coaches need to focus on improving the athletes’ skills, teaching life lessons, creating a fun environment, and giving back to the sport so that athletes want to come back.
- Verbal abuse and crazy coaching needs to stop.

#### **Officials:**

- The abuse towards officials needs to stop.
- Attacking an official over a call, is it worth the argument or should it be taught that it is part of the game.
- Officials need to be a model for the athletes so that if they see the officials acting well, they will so the same.

**Others:**

- Associations need to step up and set a standard for people to follow at every level of competition.
- Provincial bodies need to be included in the solution and encourage everyone to work together on finding a solution.
- Sports being played only for entertainment value, may not be enough to keep athlete in sport? Legal support may be a factor with deciding a solution.
- Media should be utilized for a proactive approach towards sport.
- By identifying and acknowledging positive individuals who display the message/characteristics we are aiming to capture, they can be utilized as guidance for all.
- We should be able to expand resources for these positive individuals so that they are able to pass on their knowledge/skills.
- Professional athletes might be good advocates for good behaviours in sports.

**General commentary to question #2:**

- Larger sports many have easier access to funds to help their athletes with this problem, ex: hockey vs. speed skating.
  - Therefore it is important to bring all sports together on this issue to identify the key issues and collectively find resolutions.
- It will take the entire community to come together to support our athletes.
- Any funds raised for support programs needs to be delivered at our facilities which should be a safe environment for everyone.
- There needs to be free access and fun for everyone.
- Every athlete needs to be included, participate in fair play and show good leadership towards their team.
- Everyone needs to work together for a collective impact towards change. It needs to start from the bottom and work its way up to the top (pyramid effect).
- If we are going to make a change, we have to plan and implement this in our programs. We have to be intentional in what we do, nothing happens by accident.
- The results will not be immediate therefore we need to have patience. Everyone needs to come together and communicate, starting with believers (people at Attack on Sport night)

**Everyone is responsible to fix!**

### **Question 3 – Where should we go from here?**

#### **Education:**

- To start, education needs to continue to be available for young people through courses at universities, after school programs etc.
- Programs also need to be available for everyone; coaches, parents, athletes, boards/administrators etc.
- They need to recognize the potential impact they can have on sport depending on how their role affects the athlete and what happens when people don't respect it.
- The questions needs to be asked "why am I here", for the athlete, for myself, for the entertainment?
- Everyone needs to learn the difference between professional and amateur leagues.
- There needs to be a difference between entertainment, money making sport and developing the potential of the athlete/sport.
- It is crucial for parents and coaches to understand the previous idea.
- Facts and research regarding education points, needs to be shared with everyone.
- People can learn from these ideas to help from the ground up (volunteers).
- Better communication and advocacy need to be pushed towards continuing activities for life.
- Respect needs to be taught in sport.
- Events can be held at bar for more appealing atmosphere for older demographics.

#### **Speaking up:**

- We need to have a stronger voice who will speak up in our facilities.
- Media coverage could be utilized to get the ideas out there faster and to more people.
- Using a high profile spokesperson could help share ideas as well.
- We need to do a better job sharing the good stories, not just the bad ones.
- Everyone needs to stand up for what is right; meanwhile we need to keep the discussion going amongst each other.
- People cannot be afraid to speak up against inappropriate behaviour and tactically address the issues seen with coaches, players and parents.
- Open communication needs to be available for everyone.

#### **Programs:**

- Sport programs need to be available that are guiding and nurturing for the athlete.
- Develop an academy for students to learn proper coaching at a younger age.
- Currently it seems that older coaches with experience tend to incorporate more social conscience and younger coaches are more focused on technical aspects of sport.

- Coaching should be switched from commander to mentor so that players have the larger leadership role.
- Everyone needs to feel involved so that community values can be promoted.

#### **Discipline:**

- Officials should be given more power to eject parents and players with harsher consequences.
- There should be repercussions for anything that happens ex: sexual assault, bullying, fighting etc. for everyone involved.
- Clubs/organizations need to require parents to take education courses with all conveners and members in attendance.
- This will allow everyone to be on the same page from the beginning about all the rules and consequences.
- If anyone breaks the guidelines set out, consequences must be enforced by ejection, banning, penalty, penal action etc.; whichever action is deemed appropriate to be taken.

#### **General commentary to question #3:**

- The conversation about sports needs to continue.
- It will not easily be solved but incremental changes can be made. It will be difficult to get everyone on the same page regarding following rules, but it needs to start somewhere.
- Parents cannot continue to force coaches to quit because of differences in opinion.
- Peer moderators could be used for parents to voice opinions.
- We need to recognize the deficiencies and work on improving them.
- Go from disorganized sport to organized sport by mapping out the sport system to provide clarity.
- There are not enough opportunities for athletes to play for fun.
- When should athletes keep score?
- Does the score matter when we are aiming to get everyone involved?
- Club vs school system; is there a difference?
- We need to create an action plan for the team, players and coaches. Precise plan equals precise outcome.

<b>Everyone is responsible for change!</b>
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#### Future Directions:

There was positive feedback to this first forum and strong encouragement that follow up occur including:

- Identification of strategies to promote the benefits of sport
- Follow up with another forum within one year's time to evaluate where we are and continue the discussion.

### **Comments/Interest?**

We invite your comments and input into the proceedings. We are equally interested in anyone interested in participating on the committee.

Please send your comments or interest to participate to:

Dr. Glen Bergeron PhD, CAT(C)  
Associate Dean  
Gupta Faculty of Kinesiology and Applied Health  
The University of Winnipeg  
515 Portage Ave  
Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9  
Ph: 204.786.9190  
Email: [g.bergeron@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:g.bergeron@uwinnipeg.ca)

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