



Photo: Andre Forget (CAC)

Photo: Coaching Association of Canada

# Dispute Prevention for COACHES

During your career as a coach, several situations may arise that can lead to misunderstandings, disagreements or disputes.

Beyond having some of your coaching decisions challenged, you may encounter disputes with your sport organization which have the potential to hinder your ambitions as a coach. It is essential that you understand your rights and obligations to prevent and resolve disputes. Most importantly, you should know where to find help if necessary.

## What can you do as a coach?



Coaching Association of Canada  
Association canadienne des entraîneurs



Centre de Règlement des Différends Sportifs du Canada  
Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada

## CARE FOR YOUR ATHLETES, TEAM AND SPORT

As a coach, you are in a decision-making position. The following resources are useful in helping you make well-informed, fair decisions to minimize the risk of disputes and create a positive high performance environment for your athletes.

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (the SDRCC) offers a variety of practical workshops that can be specifically tailored to coaches, as well as publications that can inform coaches, including:

- **Building Sound Team Selection Policies:**

Team selection is the most common source of disputes giving rise to appeals.

This interactive workshop is specifically designed to assist coaches in developing proper selection criteria so as to minimize potential team selection disputes.



- **Conducting Fair Disciplinary Processes:** Managing the behavior of team members can be daunting and have a negative impact on the team environment. From having proper rules in place to enforcing these rules, this workshop will provide insight into the process from start to finish.

- **Identify and Avoid Conflicts of Interest in Sport Organizations:**

Wearing several hats (team coach, personal coach, committee member, parent, etc.) can bring about situations of conflicts of interest that undermine the credibility of an organization. In this workshop, coaches will learn to identify, categorize, avoid and properly address situations of conflicts of interest.



- **Negotiation Skills for Sport Leaders:** Disputes can be avoided or resolved informally and quickly with good negotiation skills. This workshop constitutes an introduction to best practices for principled negotiations within a sport context. Through interactive scenarios and mock negotiations, coaches will learn how to negotiate effectively while preserving relationships.
- **Match-Fixing, Gambling and Other Forms of Corruption: Is your Sport Immune?:** Behaviors and decisions that are motivated by self-interest prevent athletes from achieving the sport outcomes they deserve. This workshop is a real eye-opener for those who believe in the integrity of sport, so they learn how to recognize, resist and report corruption or suspicious behavior.



Contact the SDRCC to find out how you can benefit from these workshops **free of charge**. Click on the [Book a Workshop](#) button on the SDRCC website for a more detailed description of all workshops offered.

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# 2.

## TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR CAREER

As a coach, consider the following points to minimize the risk of disputes with your sport organization or employer:

- **A contractual agreement** between you and your sport organization should be in place, as well as a clear job description. Thoroughly read and understand the contract before signing it and clarify any clauses that you find ambiguous. A mediation or arbitration clause can be inserted to streamline access to professional dispute resolution services.
- **Coaching certification** provides a clear message that you have been trained and evaluated as a coach. Work with your sport to maintain your coaching certification in the Coaching Association of Canada's National Coaching Certification Program and related requirements to earn professional development points. If you are not a Chartered Professional Coach, consider pursuing that professional designation.



- **Codes of conduct** are in place to govern coaches' behavior, clearly defining the applicable sanctions. Be aware of and remain compliant with the codes that apply to you, support your organization's endorsement of the Responsible Coaching Movement and meet your obligation to complete a specified education program for safe sport.
- **Coaching appointments** and performance assessments should be based on criteria that are clear and well-communicated. Sport organizations are encouraged to provide clear and fair selection policies for athletes aspiring to higher levels in sport, and should provide the same to coaches vying for the higher echelons of their profession.



# 3.

## SEEK HELP TO RESOLVE ISSUES

The SDRCC is a not-for-profit organization offering dispute prevention and resolution services to the Canadian sport community. It offers a wide range of services, from informal resolution facilitation to a formal arbitration process, all of which can be tailored to the needs of each situation. These services are described in further detail on its website.

**DID YOU KNOW?** It is not just for athletes!!! National team coaches of national sport organizations funded by Sport Canada must also be provided with the right to appeal sport-related decisions to the SDRCC, once the internal means of appeal have been exhausted.

When coaches believe they or their athlete(s) have been unfairly treated pursuant to a decision from a sport organization, they may be able to appeal this decision before the SDRCC. The SDRCC is currently mandated to resolve, **at no cost**, disputes between sport organizations funded through Sport Canada's Sport Support Program and their members. The SDRCC also offers fee-for-service dispute resolution services to other members of the sport community. Contact the SDRCC to find out more information about its services.



Photo: Wheelchair Basketball Canada

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