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Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)9

of the Committee of Ministers to member states

on the revised Code of Sports Ethics

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 June 2010
at the 1088th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15*b* of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress;

Wishing to see sport develop in the spirit of the European Sports Charter;

Aware of the pressures which the race for success, commercialisation, the need for sports “stars” and exposure to the mass media bring to bear on sport;

Convinced of the need to provide athletes with a system of values which will enable them to make responsible choices when facing such pressures;

Convinced that including the principles set out in the Code of Sports Ethics in physical education and sports curricula and in the sports policies of states and non-governmental organisations will favourably influence the attitudes of athletes and the general public to sport;

Considering that there is a need to update Recommendation (92) 14 revised of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the revised Code of Sports Ethics (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 September 1992 at the 480th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies and revised for the first time at their 752nd meeting on 16 May 2001) in the light of Resolution No. 1 on Ethics in Sport, adopted at the 11th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport in Athens in December 2008,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

- give their full support to the Code of Sports Ethics, as it appears in the appendix to this recommendation;
- take steps to ensure a wide dissemination of the Code of Sports Ethics to sports organisations and promote its dissemination among all appropriate target groups, particularly those working with young persons;

- encourage the authorities responsible for school and out-of-school education to introduce the principles set out in the Code of Sports Ethics into physical education and sports curricula;
- encourage regional, national and international sports organisations to take account of the principles of the Code of Sports Ethics in their activities on the basis of co-operation between public authorities and the sports movement;

Calls on the Secretary General to transmit this recommendation to:

- a. the governments of States Parties to the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 18);
- b. international organisations and international sports organisations.

Appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)9

Code of Sports Ethics

“Fair play – the winning way”

Objectives

1. The Code of Sports Ethics has solid historical and philosophical foundations. It has two underlying principles: fairness and sport as an arena for individual self-fulfilment. Fairness refers to practising a sport while faithfully respecting the rules of competition, and to providing everyone with an equal chance of taking part in sport. Sport should be practised according to fair play, be free of discrimination and be an activity for all. Moreover, sport should be an arena for self-fulfilment in which everyone is given the opportunity for self-development and self-control according to their potential and interests. In this way, sport can become an important ethical and cultural factor in society.
2. Proceeding from the principle that the ethical considerations that underpin fair play are not an optional element but an essential component to all sporting activities, the purpose of the Code of Sports Ethics is to provide resolute backing for the rules and for the highest values of sport and to respond to the new challenges raised with regard to sports ethics which apply to all levels of proficiency and commitment in sports activities, including recreational as well as competitive sports. In this spirit, sports ethics must fully espouse the equal participation of women, girls, men and boys in all individual and/or team sports without gender-based discrimination.
3. In a context where sport – characterised by fair play, sportsmanship and voluntary involvement – is subject to the pressures of modern society, the Code of Sports Ethics sets out to:
 - a. identify and promote educational and preventive measures intended to reinforce best practice. One of the main issues is therefore the promotion of fair play among children and young people;

b. bring ethical principles to the organisation and practice of sport which will allow the challenges facing sports ethics to be analysed and met.

4. In so doing, the code promotes the dissemination of examples of good practice for promoting diversity through sport and combating discrimination of all kinds in sport. It promotes the right of children and young people to participate and enjoy their involvement in sport, while also emphasising the responsibilities of institutions and adults to promote sports ethics and fair play and to ensure that these rights are respected.

Definition of sports ethics

5. Sports ethics is a positive concept that guides human action. Sport is a social and cultural activity which, practised fairly, enriches society and friendship between nations. Sport is also recognised as an activity which, if played fairly, offers the individual the opportunity for self-knowledge, self-expression and fulfilment, personal achievement, skill acquisition and demonstration of ability, social interaction, enjoyment, good health and well-being. Sport promotes involvement and responsibility in society and the environment with its wide range of clubs and leaders working voluntarily. In addition, responsible involvement in some activities can help to promote sensitivity to the environment.

6. Fair play is defined as much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and sportsmanship. Sports ethics is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, the use of unfair strategies whilst respecting the rules, doping, misuse of nutritional supplements, violence (both physical and verbal), sexual harassment and abuse of children, young people and women, trafficking in young sportspeople, discrimination, exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

Responsibility for sports ethics

7. Participation by children and young people in sport takes place within a wider social environment. Society and the individual will not benefit fully from the potential advantages of sport unless sports ethics cease to be a secondary concept and become a major objective. Sports ethics must be given the highest priority by all those who, directly or indirectly, influence and promote sporting experiences for children and young people. These include:

7.1. governments, at all levels, including agencies working with governments. Those involved in formal education have a particular responsibility;

7.2. sports and sports-related organisations, including sports federations and governing bodies, physical education associations, coaching agencies and institutes, medical and pharmacological professions and the media. These organisations are invited to continue working on possible measures for enhancing complementary co-operation between the public authorities and the sports movement, particularly in fighting corruption. The

commercial sector, including sports goods manufacturers, retailers and marketing agencies, also has a responsibility to contribute to the promotion of sports ethics and fair play;

7.3. individuals, including parents, teachers, coaches, referees, officials, sports leaders, administrators, journalists, doctors and pharmacists, top-level athletes who serve as role models, and persons who work on a voluntary or professional basis. As spectators, individuals may also have responsibilities complementary to those of active sportspeople, such as promoting and disseminating best practices.

8. Each of these institutions and individuals has a responsibility and a role to play. This Code of Sports Ethics is addressed to them. It will only be effective if all involved in sport are prepared to take on the responsibilities identified in the code.

Governments

9. Governments have the following responsibilities:

9.1. to encourage the adoption of high ethical standards in all areas of society where sport is present, to improve controls with regard to integrity and ethics in funding of amateur and leisure sport;

9.2. to stimulate and support those organisations and individuals who have demonstrated ethical principles in their sports-related activities;

9.3. to co-operate in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the Code of Sports Ethics;

9.4. to encourage physical education and sports teachers and instructors to give the promotion of sports ethics a central place in school curricula and refer to the positive contribution of sport to humankind and society;

9.5. to commit to preserving the integrity of sport, under threat especially from match fixing, trafficking in young sportspeople and illegal betting;

9.6. to support as far as possible all initiatives aimed at promoting sports ethics, particularly among young people, and encouraging institutions to make sports ethics a central priority;

9.7. to continue, in co-operation with the sports movement, the Monitoring Group of the Anti-Doping Convention (ETS No. 135) and the Standing Committee of the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches (ETS No. 120), the promotion and monitoring of Recommendation [Rec\(2001\)6](#) on the prevention of racism, xenophobia and racial intolerance in sport;

9.8. to encourage research both nationally and internationally in order to improve our understanding of the complex issues surrounding young people's involvement in sport, and to identify the extent of poor behaviour and the opportunities for promoting sports ethics;

9.9. to stress the importance of the complementary relationship between physical and psychological health;

9.10. to share knowledge with regard to emotional health and provide training in handling the emotions associated with participation in sport;

9.11. to combat the use of genetic engineering for purposes contrary to sports ethics.

Sport and sports-related organisations

10. Sports and sports-related organisations have the following responsibilities:

Concerning the framework and context of sports ethics:

10.1. to publish clear guidelines on what is considered to be ethical or unethical behaviour and ensure that, at all levels of participation and involvement, consistent and appropriate incentives and/or sanctions are applied;

10.2. to ensure that all decisions are made in accordance with a code of ethics for their sport which reflects the Code of Sports Ethics;

10.3. to raise awareness of the concept of sports ethics within their sphere of influence by means of campaigns, awards, educational material and training opportunities. Such initiatives should be closely monitored and their impact evaluated;

10.4. to develop training provision in the fields of emotional and relational intelligence, which contributes both to personal development and to the quality of interpersonal relations;

10.5. to establish systems which reward sports ethics and personal levels of achievement in addition to competitive success;

10.6. to consider and formulate rules governing the right to participate in competitions and the organisation of categories in competitions in the light of the principles of sports ethics;

10.7. to assist and support the media in highlighting the contribution made by sports ethics to education and society;

Concerning work with young people:

10.8. to ensure that the structure of competition acknowledges the special requirements of growing children and young people and provides the opportunity for graded levels of involvement from recreation to high-level competition;

10.9. to encourage modification of the rules to meet the special needs of young people and put the emphasis not only on success in competition but also on sports ethics;

10.10. to ensure that safeguards are in place within the context of an overall framework of support and protection for children, young people and women, both to protect them from sexual harassment and abuse and to prevent the exploitation of children, particularly those who demonstrate precocious ability;

10.11. to ensure that all those within or associated with a sports organisation who have responsibility for children and young people are qualified at an appropriate level to guide, train and educate them, and in particular that they understand the physiological and

psychological changes associated with the child's process of development and that they are familiar with and take into account the emotional and relational functioning of human beings.

Individuals

11. Individuals have the following responsibilities:

Concerning personal behaviour:

11.1. to behave in a way which sets a good example and presents a positive role model for children and young people; to refrain in all circumstances from rewarding unfair play, demonstrating it personally or condoning it in others; and to take appropriate sanctions against such behaviour;

11.2. to ensure that their own level of training and qualification is appropriate to the needs of the child at the different stages of sporting commitment;

Concerning work with young people:

11.3. to make the health, safety and welfare of the child or young sportsperson the first priority and ensure that such considerations come before all else (reputation of the school, club, coach or parent);

11.4. to extend the initiatives taken by the international federations and organisations in order, if possible, to promote quality standards in respect of the activity of sports agents;

11.5. to provide a sporting experience for children that encourages a lifelong commitment to healthy physical activity;

11.6. to avoid treating children as small adults, but be aware of the physical and psychological changes which accompany their development and how these affect sporting performance;

11.7. to avoid placing expectations on children which they are unable to meet;

11.8. to make the participant's pleasure and enjoyment the priority and never exert undue pressure on the child which impinges on their right to freely choose to participate;

11.9. to take the same level of interest in all young people regardless of their talent and emphasise and reward personal levels of achievement and skill acquisition in addition to competitive success;

11.10. to be attentive and responsive to children's needs, so that each child feels appreciated as an individual, irrespective of his or her sporting prowess;

11.11. to encourage young children:

- to devise their own games with their own rules, to take on the roles of coach, teacher, official or referee in addition to that of participant;

- to devise their own incentives and sanctions for fair or unfair play; and
- to take personal responsibility for their actions;

11.12. to provide young people and their families with as much information as possible to ensure awareness of the potential risks and attractiveness of reaching high levels of performance.

Conclusion

12. To succeed in promoting and developing sport and involvement in sport, respect and education are crucial to the concept of sports ethics.