



Effective Athlete Leadership

The AthletesCAN Athlete Representative Leadership resource has been developed from the 1995 publication “Effective Athlete Leadership.” Many of the same components are included, albeit with updated and/or expanded information. We have also changed the focus of this online resource to more specifically target athletes who are currently or in the future wish to be an Athlete Representative for their particular sport. This resource is a toolbox of information about providing effective leadership and representation to your teammates and for your sport.

There are 4 main sections in this resource:

1. Being an Athlete Leader in Your Sport
2. Developing the Skills to be an Athlete Leader
3. Working within Sport Organizations
4. Additional Issues for Athletes

1. BEING AN ATHLETE LEADER IN YOUR SPORT

What does it mean to be an “athlete leader”? How can you, as an athlete, help to direct decisions and influence change within your sport organization? What kind of power do the athletes have in a system of multiple organizations and government policies and accountability? Simply put, the sport system should exist for the benefit of the athlete participants. The games are for the players. We sometimes have to remind those in the committee rooms and at the Board tables that we are the reason that they are spending their time and energy on programs and sport development.

A re-focusing of the sport system on the athlete participant has coined the phrase “athlete-centred”. This provides a philosophical foundation for decisions and priorities. This manual has been written to ensure that athlete representatives have the tools and the knowledge to support and further the concept of an athlete-centred system.

2. DEVELOPING THE SKILLS TO BE AN ATHLETE LEADER

2.1. Understanding Leadership

Some people seem to be “born-leaders”. They are dynamic and have a vision for the future and an idea of how to get there. They also seem to have the ability to take people with them. In reality, the skills necessary to listen with empathy, to think strategically, to speak with conviction, to verbalize a preferred future, and then to articulate the steps to be taken, are all things that can be learned.

Consider your coaches, fellow athletes, work colleagues or teachers. You can probably name someone whom you would describe being a good “leader” without necessarily being able to explain why you think so. Being a leader is not about “being in charge”. It is the ability to influence, to be visionary and to

communicate that vision to others. Decide what is important to you. Use these beliefs and values to guide your actions with others and to help you decide what changes you want to make.

Your leadership “style” will develop as you implement effective practices and ways to communicate. Leadership traits and behaviours are important and ultimately your leadership style will be situational. Different ways of dealing with people will work in different situations. Remember to be purposeful and respectful. You are not at the decision-making tables to destroy but to build and make something better.

3. WORKING WITHIN SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Each sport organization works a little differently. Every sport has its own culture, traditions and nuances. But, by virtue of the accountability framework of Sport Canada and the legislated expectations of an incorporated non-profit entity in Canada, certain things will hold true for all sport organizations.

Within the Sport Canada Accountability Framework, each NSO must minimally meet the following objectives and standards to be considered athlete focused:

Objective:

To develop high performance programs based on both the international competitive environment and athlete needs... programs that place both athletes and coaches in the forefront of NSO planning and decision-making. Athletes and coaches are defined as those who are involved in the high performance program.

National Standards:

- A policy commits the NSO to the principle of a focus on athlete needs
- Peer elected/selected national team athlete representative(s) hold voting positions on the HP committee and are members of other NSO committees or Boards, where program and policy decisions affect them directly.
- National team athletes have annual input to the evaluations of both the HP program and the coaching staff.

3.1. Functioning of Non-Profit Corporations

The Canada Corporations Act (Part II) determines the general way that an incorporated non-profit association in Canada can function (i.e.: corporation without share capital). Within those general parameters, the Bylaws of the association dictate the specifics about membership, the Board, Standing Committees, general meetings and decision-making levels. The Bylaws are initially approved by the membership and thereafter can only be altered by the membership. Final approval for some Bylaws {subsection 155(2)} must also come from the applicable federal Minister responsible for Corporations (currently Industry Canada). The association’s Bylaws are essential reading for an athlete representative. Understanding the different layers and decision-making roles will help you to understand where particular issues have to be addressed.

3.2. The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors or equivalent is the legitimate governing authority of the organization. It is a required element in an incorporated non-profit organization. Members of the Board are elected by the membership of the organization or appointed by a specific arm of the organization or an outside body. This is determined by the Bylaws of the association. As an athlete representative, you were probably elected or appointed by the high performance athletes, not by the membership as a whole.

The minimum size of a Board is three. The maximum number is up to the association, but there is usually 10 - 20 Directors. The make-up of the Board is at the discretion of the organization but the Bylaws must indicate that the Board of Directors has the power to manage the association. Other specific powers can be retained by the membership. All Directors, with the exception of ex officio or honorary directors, have a right to vote. Ideally, Directors will be recruited for Board positions based their expertise and the types of skills needed for that particular Board. Realistically, some sport organizations have trouble filling their Board of Directors slate at election time. That's why training and orientation by the NSO and a thorough understanding of the organization and the responsibilities of the Board is so important.

The Board will likely meet two or more times per year. The ways in which they can meet (face-to-face, teleconference, electronically) must be in the Bylaws. If you are traveling with the team at the time of a meeting, you may be able to join in through a speakerphone or videoconference.

If you are a Director, keep up to date with athlete issues throughout the year, and report back to your "constituents" after each Board meeting. However, Directors must also adhere to confidentiality policies and there may be items under discussion by the Board that you are not free to share with others. Individually, Directors may represent certain segments of the organization, but collectively, the Board of Directors is responsible for management and governance of the whole association.

3.3. Committees

There are usually two types of committees in an organization - a Standing Committee, which is included in the Bylaws along with specific information about how people get elected or appointed and duties of the committee members. High performance or national team committees are usually Standing Committees. The Board may also create "ad hoc" committees from time to time. By definition, these are short-term committees pulled together to perform a specific function or take on a particular task. An example is an ad hoc committee to revise a recognition program.

The **Sport Canada Accountability Framework** requires that athlete reps be included as voting members on high performance committees. Other who may sit on these committees include coaches, technical staff members, a VP or Chair of High Performance and possibly other "members-at-large". This is probably a committee of great interest to the Board as the national team provides such positive or negative profile to the sport, and a good portion of the association's financial resources are usually allocated to the HP program. The decision-making authority of the committee will depend on its terms of reference. It may only be able to make recommendations to the Board, or it may have sweeping powers to determine programs and budget. Find out how the committee functions and what it can and can't do.

Some sports may have multiple committees dealing with men's and women's programming or with different disciplines in the sport. If there is more than one athlete rep., you need to communicate regularly, but specifically before and after all committee meetings. A conference call or electronic message board can keep everyone up-to-date with issues and key messages. Athlete reps also have to remember to report back to their "constituents" after committee meetings.

3.4. Managing Change in an Organization

Now you are the athlete rep and the high performance athletes have decided that they want a change in the organization. This could be anything from a significant change within the national team program such as regional training camps vs. a centralized program, to a change in the composition of the high performance committee or a revision of association Bylaws to add an athlete to the Board. What do you do?

After reviewing the other sections in this resource you understand the decision-making layers and know how to be an effective leader for the athletes. But - change management???? Whoa!!!

Actually, many of the same principles apply as have already been discussed.

Understand the issues: You have to do your homework. Change can be threatening. You have to have the answers or at least know where to find them

- Why should the change be made?
- What isn't working? What is the history?
- Is this a long-term or short-term proposal?
- What are the alternatives?
- What are the financial implications?
- Are there other examples that can be cited? (i.e.: other successful programs or organizations)

Create a plan with a logical sequence of events, timing factors and responsibilities: What needs to be included in your plan?

- Where does this kind of decision get made?
- What is appropriate timing to implement this change?
- What is the timing for this type of decision?
- Who is in support? What is your lobbying strategy?
- How can key people help to influence the decision and therefore affect change?

Understand your opponents: Some people will oppose change because they are worried about risk or failure. Others just don't like change - period. Still others honestly feel that the status quo or an alternative to your plan is a better option. Respect their opinion as you want them to respect yours. And then - through a good analysis of the options and the reasons that you are proposing change in the first place, dazzle them with your proposal.

- You likely won't convince everyone, but you only need to convince however many are needed in vote.
- Don't alienate your opponents. They can do quite a bit of damage even after the fact if they look at it as a battle lost.
- Ask people of influence who agree with your position to speak on behalf of the proposal. They will add credibility and strengthen your position.

Use other tools if necessary: Other influences can be brought to bear if necessary. Consider media opportunities if appropriate. A legal opinion may be something that should be pursued if athletes' rights or opportunities are at issue. Use other organizations to support your position such as AthletesCAN, the COC, Sport Canada, CCES etc.

3.4.1. Changing bylaws

Bylaws are the "laws" that govern an organization. They have been created over the years and approved by the membership to represent or dictate the way in which an organization should function. They should represent both the practice and the philosophy of the organization. But, Bylaws aren't carved in stone and situations change. What is thought to be necessary now may not have been under consideration 10 years ago.

The athletes in your sport may decide that structural and functional changes should be made. These might include:

- creating a voting position(s) for athlete representatives on the Board of Directors; or
- creating an Athletes Council as a Standing Committee of the organization
- creating positions for athlete representatives on important committees of the organization.

Within your NSO's Bylaws, there is a mechanism to amend or repeal the Bylaws. The Bylaws themselves will indicate the number of days and type of notice required, and the fact that it must be dealt with at a meeting of the membership called for that purpose. (ie: a General Meetings include any resolutions to add, repeal or amend Bylaws) Ask the Executive Director about how and when to submit a resolution to add, repeal or amend the Bylaws. The wording should mimic what is already in the Bylaws. Check the

rest of the document and operating policies to make sure that your proposal will not be inconsistent or in conflict with something else.

Be prepared to do the planning noted on the Making Change in the Organization section. Expect to lobby ahead of the meeting. Find supporters who will be in attendance and ask them to speak in favour of the motion. Provide speaking points for them if necessary.

Listen to the comments at the meeting and consider amending your motion if that will make it more palatable but will not change the intent.

If your resolution is not passed the first time, reflect on the comments that were made, revise your material if you are able and get out there and lobby again. Sometimes, new ideas have to come to the floor of a meeting two or three times before they pass. Eventually, people will wonder what all the dissension was about.

3.4.2. Creating or changing policy

Revisions to policy such as Codes of Conduct, selection criteria, domestic tournament eligibility and operating procedures are usually initiated at the committee level. Outside of the Bylaws, each NSO can determine their own levels of decision-making authority within the organization. Committees will usually study an issue and develop a recommendation. Depending on the policy and the NSO, this will then need to be ratified by the Board, a committee or the membership as a whole. Regardless of the level, the recommendation may be accepted, revised or rejected.

The principles to bring about change are the same as already discussed although the logistics may be different. Find out what the timing must be for the type of change that you hope to bring about. Timing is a crucial element. Determine who is influential in this area and try to get them involved or at least in agreement. Create a plan with all of the pros and cons and lobby the people who will be involved in or able to influence the decision.

3.5. Creating an Athlete's Council

Every sport has issues that are pertinent to high performance athletes. These may include team selection, competitive schedules, training conditions and expectations, assistance with time off work to travel, carding, team coaches or support personnel, athlete representation at the table, conduct issues, communication etc, etc. The list is extensive. Athletes need to be part of the development of these policies and practices, as well as the decision-making bodies that ratify or approve them.

But unless athletes are at the table you won't be heard. Athletes need to ensure that the decisions made take athletes' interests into account. Formation and on-going meetings of an Athletes' Council has been the answer to more effective athlete representation in many sports. AthletesCAN has examples of the terms of reference for some existing Councils.

This list is a basic step-by-step process to creating an Athletes' Council:

1. Get a group of interested athletes together and determine whether or not the sport needs an Athletes' Council:

- What the Council try to do for athletes?
- What are some of the issues facing you in your sport?
- Which athletes will be included through this representation? (ie: age-group teams?, developmental pool?)
- How will a Council function? (structure, communication, working with other parts of the organization)

2. An Athletes' Council could function on an informal basis and not be officially recognized by the sport. Your influence may be limited and the athletes will have to meet at camps, by phone or e-mail. To be

formally recognized by the NSO, decided whether the Council should be included in the Bylaws or in policy. Then - follow the suggestions in part 4.4. Ideally, you want the NSO to recognize the Athletes' Council as the voice of the HP athletes, and the athletes representative as their ambassadors at meetings.

3. Funding for meetings is always an issue. There are many ways to meet electronically so that is a good alternative. A message board for athletes (password protected) on the NSO web site or a list-serve for athletes may be viable options if supported by your sport.

4. Make sure that all athletes are well-represented, (i.e. national team, juniors, developmental, women, men, and different disciplines)

5. Between formal meetings, communicate informally at events or electronically to keep all athletes well-informed about issues;

6. From day one, the Athletes' Council should endeavour to be "solution oriented". It is one thing to find a situation or issue about which you are not happy - it is more difficult but so much more productive to develop solutions and recommendations to address those issues.

7. Develop a communication plan for the Council

- Internal communication amongst the athletes
- Formal communication with the Board and committees through the Athlete Reps. Determine which committees should have athlete reps sitting as members.
- Informal communication (with key messages) at meetings, events, etc

8. Utilize the services and expertise of AthletesCAN

3.6. Including All of the Athletes' Voice

One of the key but most difficult issues in being an effective athlete representative is making sure that you represent all athletes. Your sport may have a number of athlete rep positions. Either different people may sit on different committees, or different teams or events have their own athlete rep. Regardless, communication between athlete reps and back to the constituents is crucial.

Develop a plan for communication. If your sport has an Athletes' Council, it may be your conduit back to all athletes. If there are multiple athlete reps, you should communicate regularly. Don't forget to include the age-group athletes and athletes with a disability within your organization.

4. ADDITIONAL ISSUES FOR ATHLETES

Many Athlete Representatives ask themselves - "What do I need to know? What questions will the athletes ask me?" Think back to when you were just joining the national team or had just been identified for age-group international competition. What were the areas about which you had little information, but were vitally important to you, or just plain confusing? Athletes will ask you questions about athlete agreements, funding opportunities, why a certain regulation is in place or how they can resolve a conflict with a coach or another athlete. The resources available to athletes have grown considerably in the past decade and you will be able to refer your colleagues to a number of sources. Even if you don't know the answer, you can learn where to find it.

4.1. Athlete Assistance Program

Funding is always an area of concern for athletes and as the Athlete Representative; you should be familiar with AAP.

The goal of the AAP is to contribute to improved Canadian performances at major international sporting events such as the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Pan Am Games, Paralympic Games and World Championships. The AAP identifies and supports athletes already at or having the potential to be in the top 16 in the world. It provides a monthly stipend to help with training and competitive needs. To receive AAP, athletes must be available to represent Canada in major international competitions, including World Championships, Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, must participate in preparatory and annual training programs and must adhere to their Athlete/ NSO Agreement.

4.1.1. AAP eligibility criteria

- The athlete must be a permanent resident of Canada on the date of the beginning of the carding cycle
- The athlete must have been a legal resident in Canada (student status, refugee status, work visa or permanent resident) for a minimum of one year before being considered for AAP support.
- The athlete is normally expected to participate in NSO-sanctioned programs during the one-year time period.
- Under the applicable ISF' eligibility, the athlete must currently be eligible to represent Canada at major international events including World Championships.
- The athlete must meet the carding criteria as a member of a Canadian Team at international events or in an applicable domestic event or event sanctioned by the NSO.
- For athletes in Olympic or Paralympic sports, following a three-year period as a permanent resident, continued eligibility to receive AAP support is contingent on the athlete becoming eligible to represent Canada at the Olympic or Paralympic Games.
- Athletes in non-Olympic events under consideration for inclusion in a future Olympic Games, may be considered for carding following confirmation by the IOC that the sport/event has been added to the program of the next Olympic Games.

Cards are available to athletes in both individual and team sports. There are three main types of financial support to eligible athletes:

- Living and training allowance,
 - Senior Card - \$100 / month
 - Development Card - \$500 per month
- Tuition support, including deferred tuition support,
 - post-secondary tuition support is available during the period the athlete is carded. Deferred tuition support provides tuition credits to carded athletes for each year they are carded and allows them to use these credits when they have retired from sport or are no longer carded (must be within 5 years of the last year of carding support.)
- Special-needs assistance.
 - All special-needs requests from athletes must initially be sent to the NSO for recommendation. Generally, special-needs requests are considered only from athletes for whom AAP support is their primary or major source of income or for athletes who must relocate for sport purposes.

4.2. Scholarship Opportunities for Athletes

- **AthletesCAN Team Investors Group Amateur Athletes Fund:** AthletesCAN awards twenty bursaries (\$5,000 each) to amateur athletes each year. The eligibility criteria and application process are outlined on the web site at www.athletescan.com/e/bursary.

- **The CAAWS Stacey Levitt Scholarship:** Several scholarships and bursaries are offered each year to Canadian athletes on behalf of this scholarship program. (www.caaws.ca)
- **COC Scholarships:** Scholarship programs for athletes are available through the Olympic Legacy Coaching Fund, the Petro Canada Olympic Torch Scholarship Fund, CAAWS/COC Carol Anne Letheren International Leadership Award, Carol Anne Letheren Leadership & Sport Scholarship and the Dairy Farmers of Canada Pure Determination Fund. (www.olympic.ca)

4.3. Athlete Agreements

National Sport Organizations require their high performance athletes to enter into an Athlete Agreement between the NSO and the athlete. It sets out the obligations of both the athlete and NSO, and the procedure to be followed if those obligations are not met. Each sport has its own specific content, but in general, athletes are expected to fulfill training and competitive responsibilities, follow marketing or promotional requirements, make themselves available for doping control tests and adhere to the Athlete Code of Conduct. In return, the agreement stipulates the obligations of the NSO such as notifying athletes about selection criteria, providing an appropriate appeal process for any disputes, and providing any funding support outlined in the agreement.

4.3.1. Athlete agreement content

As Athlete Representative, you can help educate your fellow athletes about the agreement content and its ramifications and intent. Optimally, the agreement will be a collaboration between the athletes and the NSO. The Athletes' Council or a group of experienced athletes should review the content before it is finalized. The agreement exists to protect both the athletes and the sport organization, and it must be fair, unbiased and reasonable for both parties. Every athlete should read the agreement before signing it. Every athlete should know and understand their own obligations and the responsibilities and obligations of the NSO.

AthletesCAN has an Athlete Agreement template and examples of various Athlete Agreements on the web site (www.athletescan.com). Staff can also help with questions about content. In addition to specifying the time period during which it is in effect, the agreement should lay out the obligations of the NSO and the athlete in several areas. If specific criteria or expectations are not in the body of the athlete agreement or attached in the appendices, then the agreement must reference the specific applicable document, source and distribution (ie: Code of Conduct, Selection Criteria for pertinent camps and/or competitions).

NSO Obligations:

- Team Selection
 - Withdrawal of selection privilege
 - Athlete Development
 - Athlete Eligibility
 - Funding Assistance
 - Athlete Uniform
 - Athlete Representation
 - Communication with Athletes

Athlete Obligations:

- Training program submission and adherence
- Participation in monitoring programs, designated training camps, competitions and special events
- Adherence to national and international anti-doping policies and codes, including consent to drug control testing
- Adherence to NSO Bylaws and policies, including Codes of Conduct
- Payment of any national team fees or charges

- Communication with coaches and NSO re: injuries, illness or other problems or conflicts that prevent or limit training, competition or participation

The agreement should contain joint obligations in the areas of:

- Marketing and fundraising
- Disciplinary Policies and Procedures
 - Expectations of behaviour
 - Definition of minor and major infractions and penalty options for same
- Breach of Agreement by Either party
 - Appeal procedure
- Reference to Other Policies Pertinent for Both Parties
 - Harassment Policy

4.3.2. What rights do athletes have?

The information below has been compiled from an excellent resource that you may want to purchase.

“Rights and Obligations; A Handbook for Athletes and Sport Organizations”, Rachel Corbett & Hillary Findlay, Centre for Sport & Law (1993). (<http://www.sportlaw.ca/>)

There are a number of factors that determine what rights and obligations athletes have in the sport system. First of all, athletes have the same general rights as any other citizen. On the other hand, inclusion on a team may dictate behavioural expectations or limit some individual decisions for the overall benefit of the team.

Sport organizations are governed by both external and internal law. External laws are federal or provincial statutes, case law and legislation. The internal laws are the Bylaws, Policies & Procedures AND Rules & Regulations of the sport organization.

The rights of athletes fall into two categories.

- **Substantive rights** include such things as equality, access and linguistic rights. The primary sources of substantive rights are the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Human Rights legislation. In most private organizations, the Constitution & Bylaws and the Policies & Procedures provide the substantive rights and privileges of membership.
- **Procedural rights** are derived from the same sources as substantive rights. Procedural rights determine the ways in which substantive rights are granted or withdrawn. Every sport organization is required to ensure procedural fairness in all of its dealings with members. What are the principles of procedural fairness?
 - The applicable decision has to be made by a person or body with the authority or jurisdiction to make that decision. That information should be in the Bylaws or a committee's terms of reference or a job description.
 - The procedure used to make the decision has to be fair.
 - The athlete must know the standard or criterion that has been used or applied. (ie: selection criteria, code of conduct)
 - The athlete must have an opportunity to present their case at a hearing, with appropriate notice of the hearing being given.
 - The athlete must have an opportunity to respond to the decision made at a hearing through an appeal process.
 - The procedure must ensure that there is no bias on the part of the decision-makers.
 - Appeal Committee members cannot have been involved with any aspect of the original decision for which an appeal is being filed.
 - The people making a decision cannot have any direct or indirect interest in the outcome.
 - The people making a decision cannot have an attitudinal bias.

Bodies such as the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada, the International Court of Arbitration for Sport or a judicial review through the Law Courts will usually not occur until or unless the athlete has gone through all internal opportunities for appeal within the sport organizations.

4.3.3. Dealing with decisions made by an NSO

Decisions that affect the competitive opportunities and future of athletes are made a number of times each year. Every time a team is named, someone is left off. Every time a carding list is announced, some names are not included. It is critical that every NSO has defined and fair policies and procedures for team selection, carding, representation to committees, marketing and fundraising opportunities, discipline and other situations that may direct or limit benefits to athletes. All decisions of a sport organization must comply with the legal definition of procedural fairness as discussed in the What Rights Do Athletes Have section.

If an athlete is not happy with a decision that has been made by the NSO, and they believe that they have grounds to file an appeal, the athlete may want or need advice on how to proceed. The procedures for filing an appeal, including timelines, required content and the person to whom appeals must be directed should all be in the NSO's appeal procedures.

If an athlete needs more advice than you are comfortable providing, refer them to "The Sport Solution". In 1996, AthletesCAN, the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Law, the Sports Law Centre and the Dispute Resolution Centre created the Sport Solution as a not-for-profit program to help high performance Canadian amateur athletes resolve legal conflicts. It is available free of charge to all members of AthletesCAN. The Sport Solution is committed to achieving athlete centred sport and strives to achieve this objective by counselling and advocating on behalf of Canadian amateur athletes so that they may take action with respect to sports related legal issues that affect them. Services provided include advice on preparation for appeals and arbitration and advise on the Athlete Agreement.

4.4. Harassment Issues in Sport

Unfortunately, harassment is an issue in sport. Over the past few years, the media and growing knowledge have brought situations to light that at another time may have been swept under the rug. The tenuous relationship that exists between an authority figure and someone with less overt power can be a minefield. Not every coach-athlete relationship is a negative one. Many athletes name their coach or other sport officials as being critical to their development and success as an athlete. However, as an Athlete Representative, you should be aware of harassment as a possibility in our sporting environment. [Check out this website](#) for several informative articles on harassment in sport. Every NSO should have a Harassment Policy that defines harassment and provides a procedure to follow if someone needs to file a complaint.

What is harassment? Harassment is unwanted, uninvited remarks, gestures, comments or actions that make someone feel unsafe, degraded or uncomfortable. It creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment which interferes with the enjoyable pursuit of sport. Harassment is about the impact of the behaviour, not the intent behind it. The accepted standard is that if a reasonable and objective person thinks that the behaviour is harassing, then it will likely be found to be so. The onus on each of us is to stop the behaviour that someone else has identified as making them feel uncomfortable. When the individual doing the harassing is in a position of authority, such as a coach or team official or senior athlete, there may be reluctance on the part of an athlete to submit a complaint. As an Athlete Representative, you can assist the athlete by providing advice or supporting the harassed athlete when they request that the offending individual cease the harassing behaviour.

The standard for both harassing behaviour and for failing to stop it is that a person ought reasonably to have known that their behaviour (actions, gestures or remarks) was unwelcome, humiliating or intimidating or that the behaviour exhibited (actions, gestures or remarks) as a person in authority was harassment.

Athletes should feel safe, comfortable and free from intimidating behaviour when training and travelling for Canadian teams. This checklist is a good tool for Athlete Representatives to use with other athletes to evaluate the athletic environment of the sport.

1. Do you feel safe training at this facility?
2. Do you feel safe as you travel to and from this facility?
3. Do spectators harass you or your teammates?
4. Are the coaches and other officials equipped to deal with harassment?
5. Does your coach make you feel uncomfortable with looks, touching, comments or other behaviours?
6. Does your coach make sexist, racist or other derogatory comments?
7. Does your coach make humiliating comments about your body?
8. Does your coach touch you in inappropriate ways?
9. Does your coach understand the difference between appropriate and not physical contact?
10. Do you feel safe if you find yourself alone with your coach?
11. Have you talked to others in your club, team about this coach's attitudes and behaviours?

If there are incidents of harassment, what can be done to stop it and prevent any reoccurrences?

- **Name the Harassment**
 - pay attention to what is going on
 - ask participants if harassment is occurring
- **Interrupt the Harassment**
 - intervene sooner rather than later -- don't let an incident escalate
 - keep the victim safe from further harm
 - quickly review the steps to take under the relevant harassment policy
 - if you feel confident, use your judgment to bring about an informal resolution: apologies, removal of the harassers
 - remind the harassers that threats of retaliation will be treated as further incidents of harassment
- **Report the Harassment**
 - report it to your supervisor or sport organization
 - find out about the NSO's Harassment Policy and support the athlete in following the procedure to file a complaint
 - Document the incident, the steps you took and your follow up -- file a copy with the appropriate body
- **Follow Through**
 - ask for advice from the Sport Solution or the CSC with whom you work
 - maintain confidentiality about situations that are disclosed to you

4.5. Retiring Athletes

You may or may not be thinking about retirement at this particular point in your athletic career, but it will happen someday. It may be your choice, it may be forced upon you through injury or it may be that you don't make a team and time slips away until you decide that it's too late to try again. Regardless, every national team athlete has to make that transition to being a former national team player. As an Athlete Representative, you can help your fellow athletes with suggestions on different resources that they can access as they consider retirement.

The Canadian Sport Centres, through their Athlete Services departments, have various types of resources for retiring or retired athletes. The COC engages Warren Shepell Consultants to provide free counselling and referral services to Canada's Olympic and Pan American Games athletes, including career planning. The AAP's deferred tuition credit opportunity enables a retired athlete to pursue or continue a post-secondary program within five years of being carded.

Retired athletes have a great deal to contribute to the Canadian sport system. Retirement may be the time for them to get involved as coaches, officials or sport administrators. Many sports have "masters" competitions at the national and international levels. Your sport may need retired athletes to offer their expertise on programming or technical committees or in the development of technical materials. Encouragement from the Athlete Representative to the retiring athlete to stay involved or come back after a short break in some capacity may be the catalyst needed. We need the knowledge that athletes develop over the years and we need to nurture and support that knowledge to empower other athletes to life-long involvement with sport.