

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

SDRCC Chief Executive Officer's Statement on Minister Guilbeault's Announcement of the New Independent Safe Sport Mechanism

Montréal (Québec) - On behalf of the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada's Board of Directors, I would first of all like to thank Minister Guilbeault and Parliamentary Secretary van Koeverden for their trust in granting us this important new mandate.

As the provider of independent and neutral dispute resolution services for almost two decades, the SDRCC is already assisting the sport community in the resolution of safe sport complaints. So, we are proud and humbled to be given the task of designing and implementing a dedicated safe sport office that has the potential to create lasting benefits for generations of athletes.

I want to acknowledge, first and foremost, the victims who have shown such courage in stepping forward to tell their stories of maltreatment. They have forced these issues into the spotlight and sparked the public debate that has led to many important developments, including today's announcement.

Our model was developed to put the needs and expectations of athletes first. We sought their advice when designing this proposal, including the three athletes on our Board of Directors. And one of our first tasks will be to create an Athlete Advocacy Committee, to provide input at every stage of implementation and beyond.

Bringing forward complaints to the [Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner](#) will be convenient and simple. Victim services will include referrals to specialized mental health resources and access to experienced legal counsel.

Beyond the athlete, we must also consider the needs of other participants in situations of power imbalance who are targets of maltreatment, including people with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

This system will be built on a solid foundation, thanks to the powerful leadership of many. For that, I want to acknowledge Sport Canada and, specifically, Minister Guilbeault, Parliamentary Secretary van Koeverden, and former Minister of Sport, Kirsty Duncan. Their efforts brought ground-breaking policy changes, supported by new funding, to help make sport safer, more inclusive and welcoming for Canadian athletes.

Clearly, there is a lot more work to be done to build this new office. We are encouraged by the support we've received from partners, across the sport system, that have endorsed our vision. We recognize that it is going to take the efforts of everyone, organizations, participants, parents, coaches and others, to achieve safe sport.

In closing, I wish to emphasize the central role that education and prevention will play in bringing about a true culture change in the Canadian sport system.



We envision sport as a positive experience for everyone involved. And we seek to accomplish this by design, not by chance.

Once again, on behalf of the SDRCC Board of Directors, our thanks to the Government of Canada for this wonderful opportunity. We look forward to working with all of you over the coming months.

About SDRCC

The SDRCC is a not-for-profit corporation created by federal legislation and funded by the Government of Canada. The mission of the SDRCC is to provide the sport community with a national alternative dispute resolution service and strengthen the culture of fairness in Canadian sport by resolving disputes quickly and efficiently and to provide expertise and assistance regarding alternative dispute resolution.

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