



## Preventing and Resolving Disputes in the Canadian Sport System



Photo: Don Galbreith

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

Beyond having some of your own coaching decisions challenged, you may sometimes find yourself in a dispute with a sport organization which has the potential to seriously hinder your coaching career ambitions. It is therefore important to educate yourself about your rights and obligations before it is too late.

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) is a not-for-profit organization offering dispute prevention and resolution services to the sport community at the national level. This leaflet offers a quick overview of dispute prevention and resolution resources available to Canadian coaches.

# Dispute Prevention and Resolution: Coaches



Photo: Kurt Knook Photography



## Dispute Prevention

The following are examples of situations that may be at the origin of disputes, as well as some ways in which the risks of such disputes may be reduced.

**CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS:** They define the terms and conditions of a relationship for the purposes of employment, sponsorship, etc. A breach occurs when a party fails to meet its obligations. Risks of disputes are reduced when:

- The agreement is free from ambiguous statements to prevent misinterpretation;
- The agreement is thoroughly read and understood before being signed.

Inserting a mediation and arbitration clause into contracts can facilitate resolution of disputes.

**PROFESSIONAL STATUS:** Injustice occurs when coaching credentials, appointments or other professional nominations are based on reasons beyond skill set, experience or other relevant criteria. Risks are reduced when:

- The decision-making process is conducted in a fair and equitable manner, free of discrimination or bias;
- The criteria are clearly communicated in writing to potential candidates;
- Coaches know and understand the applicable criteria and policies.

**DISCIPLINARY MATTERS:** Sanctions imposed on coaches for unacceptable behavior. Risks are reduced when:

- A code of conduct governs coaches' behavior, clearly defining the applicable sanctions;
- Sanctions are justifiable and coherent with the seriousness of the violation.

## Resolution Facilitation

The Resolution Facilitation (RF) process can help resolve misunderstandings and disagreements before they turn into disputes. This service is offered **free of charge** by the SDRCC to help National Sport Organizations and their members work out their differences in a consensual manner.

The RF process is informal and confidential; it can help at any point of a dispute. It is an ideal avenue to help parties openly discuss all issues in an attempt to seek their resolution with the assistance of a neutral third party.

## Dispute Resolution

In addition to Resolution Facilitation, the SDRCC currently offers three types of dispute resolution services:

- Mediation
- Med/Arb
- Arbitration

These services are described in more detail on the SDRCC's website.

When coaches think they have been treated unfairly, it is important to find out quickly what avenues are available to them to appeal the decision. In order to access the SDRCC dispute resolution services, coaches must have exhausted all internal appeal procedures provided by the rules of their sport organization. SDRCC procedures are governed by the Canadian Sport Dispute Resolution Code (available on the SDRCC's website).

## SDRCC Resources for Coaches

- For more dispute prevention information, visit SDRCC's website for resources free of charge;
- SDRCC is currently mandated to resolve disputes between National Sport Organizations and their members;
- SDRCC also offers a fee-for-service program in order to make its dispute resolution services available to other members of the sport community. Contact the SDRCC to find out if your dispute qualifies.

## Contact Information

### By phone:

Local (514) 866-1245  
Toll-Free 1-866-733-7767

### By fax:

Local (514) 866-1246  
Toll-Free 1-877-733-1246

### On the Web:

[www.sdrcc.ca](http://www.sdrcc.ca)

### In person / By mail:

1080 Beaver Hall, Suite 950  
Montreal, Quebec, H2Z 1S8

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