



Ethics in Sport

GUIDELINES FOR COACHES



Credits

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"It was with sport that I learned everything I know about ethics"
A. Camus

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Ethics in Sport

Guidelines for Coaches

The present document has been published by the Luso-Illyrian Institute for Human Development as part of its cooperation with the National Plan for Ethics in Sport, in Portugal, and forms part of the LEDs Play module from the LED on Values Programme. Its content is stimulated by the praise for ethics in sport in the Code of Sports Ethics promoted by the European Council, the European Sports Charter and the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport. It is also a result of the European Parliament resolution proposal on the European Dimension in Sport.

Coaches, as central agents in the process of sports development, play a key role in transmitting ethical values to all those they come into contact with, in particular to their practitioners, with this responsibility also shared by the institutions to which they are attached, insofar as they represent the community of practice, development and sharing.

In this sense, the "Guidelines for Coaches" presented here are aimed at enhancing the framework for coaches in carrying out their pedagogic work among their practitioners, particularly younger individuals, from the point of view of education for values and sports ethics.

Starting from a conceptual approach, different support tools are supplied so that coaches can operationalise their activity within education towards ethics through the practice of sport, further improving their educational intervention.

What is ethics and what is its purpose?

Ethics refers to *ethos* - principle, basis, foundation - a set of archetypes, models and values that form the character of each person and they translate, through action, into their way of being. Ethics is thus the set of norms of behaviour and ways of life through which human beings tend to realize the value of the good.

Why ethics in Sport?

Ethics, as a system of values, helps us to be aware that we cannot live in any manner whatsoever, that in life not everything is permitted and that our behaviour has consequences for others and for the society that we help to create. The same vision should be applied to the practice of sport: individual objectives or victory cannot be the only goal just as this cannot be obtained at any price, but this should imply values such as effort, respect, tolerance and justice, so valuing the sporting context as a motivator of ethical and deontological values.

In this sense, sport demonstrates a single capital, which can and should be used for the purpose of development for educational purposes, since it is linked to a wide range of values that are potentially connected.

What are the values of sport?

Institutionally, the following principles can be identified as being the structuring values of sport:



International
Fair-Play
Committee



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

International
Olympic
Committee

Performance and achievement: performance should always be linked to the effort used to achieve objectives.

Rules: performance is worthwhile if done in compliance with the rules.

Equal opportunities: without exception, everyone has access to sports, enjoying within it the same rights and the same duties. Practice (and competition) conditions must also be the same for different athletes and no prior benefit should be given to some over others.

Respect: need to show tolerance and acceptance to all those involved in sport and outside it.

Health: sporting activities and behaviour associated with these should never jeopardize the health and well-being of athletes and their teammates/opponents.

Joy of effort: Young people develop and practise physical, behavioural and intellectual skills by challenging themselves and each other in physical activities, movement, games and sport.

Fair play: Fair play is a sports concept, but it is applied worldwide today in many different ways. Learning fair play behaviour in sport can lead to the development and reinforcement of fair play behaviour in the community and in life.

Respect for others: When young people who live in a multicultural world learn to accept and respect diversity, and practise personal peaceful behaviour, they promote peace and international understanding.

Pursuit of excellence: A focus on excellence can help young people to make positive, healthy choices, and strive to become the best that they can be in whatever they do.

Balance between body, will and mind: Learning takes place in the whole body, not just in the mind, and physical literacy and learning through movement contribute to the development of both moral and intellectual learning.

Ethics in Sport

In addition to the values that are potentially associated with it, sport is neutral because ...

- It can promote ethical values... or the contrary.
- It can promote the development of a positive self-image and respect for others... or the contrary.
- It can strengthen the community... or the contrary.
- It can promote socialisation, the development of new friendships and their strengthening, reinforcing healthy lifestyles and stimulating community participation and social cohesion, or... on the contrary, it can promote violence, doping, cheating, and winning at any cost.

It depends on the stakeholders involved in guiding sport as a tool for the development of ethics and values.

In extra-curricular sporting activity, it is the coaches who must take on most responsibility for the transmission and strengthening of ethical values:

- Because they are the stakeholders most likely to be in contact with all other stakeholders.
- Because of the leadership position which they take in the educational process stimulated by sporting activity.
- Because of the potential example they can offer athletes.

Coaches must also assume responsibility for preventing and resolving conflicts that promote and reduce the following behaviour:

**PREJUDICE | RACISM | HOMOPHOBIA |
VIOLENCE | GENDER STEREOTYPES
DOPING | BULLYING | CORRUPTION /
COMBINATION OF RESULTS**



Programme guidelines

The Code of Sports Ethics promoted by PNED-IPDJ identifies the responsibilities of coaches from the point of view of education for values and ethics through the practice of sport.

Code of Sports Ethics - Commitment to Sports Ethics Responsibilities of Coaches

- ✓ Respect, in all forms and at all times, and equally, the athletes for whom they are responsible, by preserving their health and physical and mental integrity.
- ✓ Promote sportsmanship among athletes, and also in their own training.
- ✓ Respect the technical rules of the sport and contribute to their qualitative improvement.
- ✓ Refuse and report fraud or manipulation of results, always defending sporting truth.
- ✓ Consider activity colleagues as partners regarding the development of the sporting disciplines they train.
- ✓ Foster a healthy relationship among all classmates.
- ✓ Provide an ethical model for all, especially for younger people.
- ✓ Promote the ethical values underlying sport and life for all age groups.
- ✓ Oppose the use of any prohibited substances or methods that artificially improve the performance of athletes, in accordance with applicable anti-doping rules, and the use of methods that do not comply with medical ethics or regular scientific data.
- ✓ Do not use training methods, practices and rules that may endanger the health and welfare of athletes, and assess and take into account growth stages and the stage of development, seeking to provide adequate nutrition, leisure time and recovery and integrating the system with school and social activities.
- ✓ Avoid any situation that may lead to conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest are understood to be when there are, or appear to be, private or personal interests which may call into question their integrity and independence in the performance of their duties.
- ✓ Complying with the Code of Sports Ethics which has been approved by the representative associations of the area of activity of which your professional category is part.

Responsibilities of the Coach

How to educate for ethical values in and through sport?

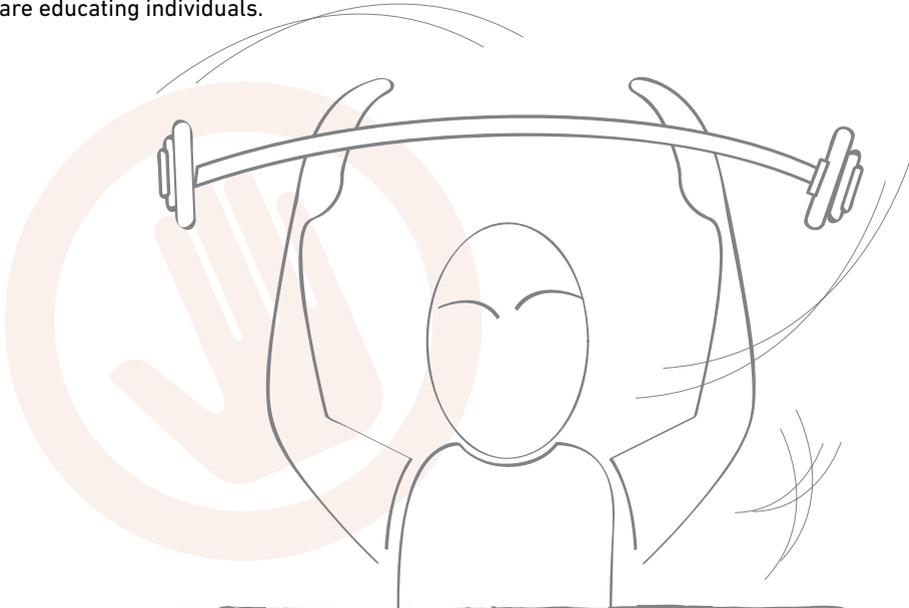
BEING A COACH ...

Need to combat **EARLY SPECIALIZATION**, respecting the developmental phases of children and young people

Working with children who have started their sporting path must involve concern for their motor literacy, as well as affective and emotional aspects and their socialisation in accordance with the sporting spirit and its values. Doing this must involve developing sports activities which may provide them with fun and playful satisfaction.

It is very important to stimulate a practice of sport suitable for their age, through which children can obtain satisfaction and motivation to continue. The main objective of practising should be associated with the development of future citizens so as to be active and healthy with strong values, that is, practising sports all their life.

Never forget that, more than building athletes, coaches working with children and young people are educating individuals.

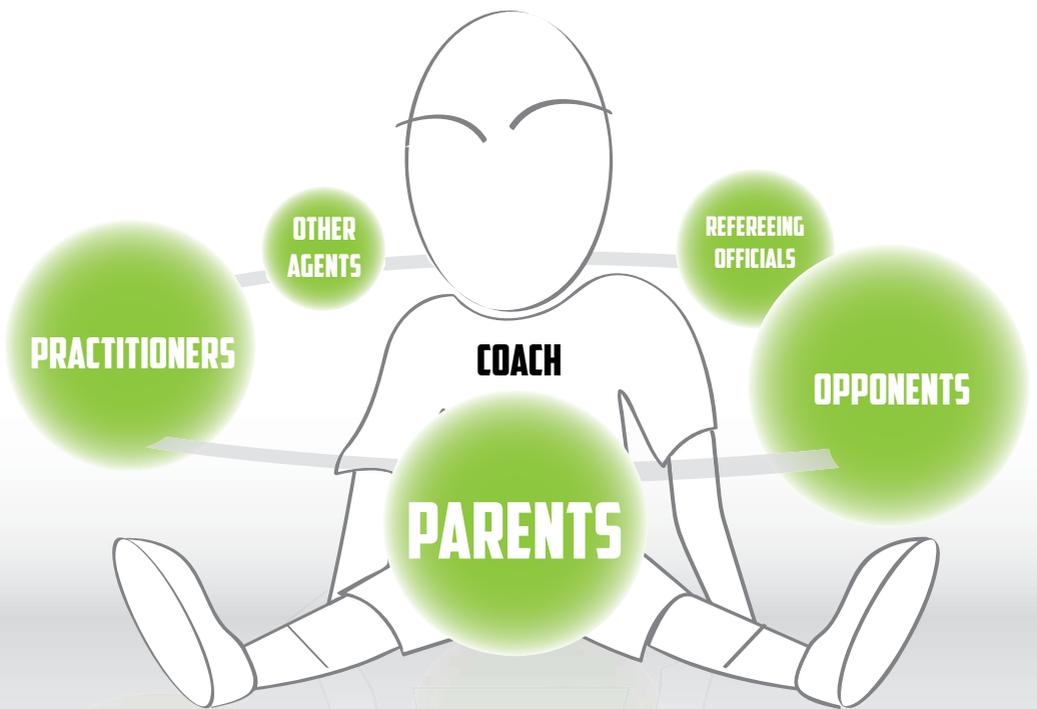


The health of children and young people comes first!

How to educate for ethical values in and through sport?

BEING A COACH ...

Need for an **EXEMPLARY** relationship with other agents



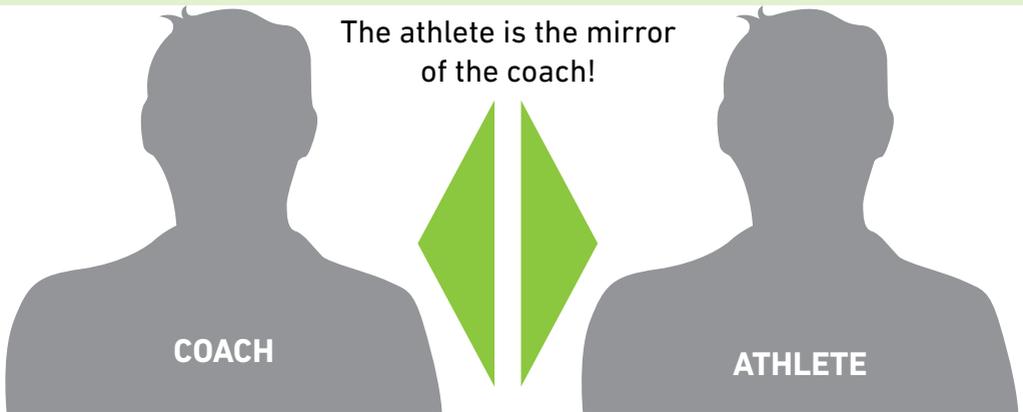
Need to encourage these different agents towards **CARRYING OUT MORE ETHICAL** SPORT which is also more educational.

Responsibilities of the Coach

How to educate for ethical values in and through sport?

BEING A COACH ...

Need to represent and express certain values to your athletes and other stakeholders in an **EXEMPLARY** manner.



Need to represent and express certain values to your athletes!

Understanding	Flexibility	Discipline	Rigour
Tolerance	Support	Demands	Respect
Autonomy	Differentiation	Responsibility	Equity
Justice	Fun	Straightforwardness	Commitment

INTEGRITY



How to educate for ethical values in and through sport?

BEING A COACH ...

Need to understand **COMPETITION** as a sporting event that is part of the **EDUCATIONAL PROCESS** and not its end product!

Competition should be understood as an educational, participatory and social tool, in addition to being a valid instrument for transmitting values.

The objective associated with competition should be to create favourable and positive habits and attitudes regarding the practice of sport and the actual act of competing.



Educational competition should:

- Be imbued with the playful spirit.
- Be open, not discriminating against anyone for any reason.
- Promote full respect for the rules, others, the space and the self.
- Stimulate personal and group effort.
- Not just be about results, and this also involves personal and collective development.

Need to understand **COMPETITION** not only in its formal and regulatory sense, but as an activity with great educational potential which could and should be stimulated in **DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND TASKS** carried out in the training context.

Pedagogy as an example

“Is my behaviour as a coach exemplary in promoting ethical values among those with whom I come into contact? In what way do I influence my athletes?”

The following questions are intended to help coaches realize the impact of their behaviour with athletes. They are derived from ethical principles which should be important for coaches and the training process they are involved in.

- Are my comments and actions appropriate with regard to the beliefs and experiences of others?
- Do I try enough to understand the expectations and viewpoints of others?
- Does my physical posture show a desire to dominate? Or, on the contrary, does it demonstrate a readiness for dialogue?
- Am I too hard or too permissive towards my athletes? • Can I maintain a proper balance in context and situations involving the athletes?
- What relationship do I establish between tolerance and discipline?
- Are my athletes afraid of me?
- Do athletes respect me?
- Am I fair and impartial in the decisions I make?
- How well do I know my athletes as individuals? What evidence do I have to base this knowledge on?
- Can I motivate my athletes by differentiating their profile and goals?
- Do I develop a positive atmosphere for the development of the sports skills that I am coaching?
- Are the motivational guidelines I give my athletes task- or ego-based?
- What is my reaction when an athlete makes a mistake?
- Do I invite my athletes into the different decision-making processes?
- How much power do I have over my athletes and how do I use this?

Am I doing the right thing? Why?



It is important that all coaches have the habit of carrying out a self analysis process concerning the suitability of their behaviour in terms of their educational impact.

To correct ethically inappropriate behaviour, the coach should consider taking the following steps for reflection and action:

- Admit the possibility that we make mistakes.
- Identify honestly and sincerely which mistakes have been made and what forms of prejudice have been developed as a result.
- Identify specific actions that reflect the mistakes made and which alternatives can be used.
- Request the support of other colleagues so that they can help to find a solution for the mistakes made, prevent them and correct them.

The focus and awareness of coaches regarding the importance of their role is as an educational agent must be ongoing.



A photograph of two soccer players in a physical struggle on a field at night. The player on the left is wearing an orange jersey and black shorts, while the player on the right is wearing a white jersey and dark shorts. They are both wearing socks and cleats. The background is a blurred stadium with bright lights. A green semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text 'FAIR PLAY?'.

FAIR PLAY?

Will I be educating them through sport?

A soccer ball is visible in the bottom right corner of the image, partially obscured by the green overlay.

Pedagogy as an example

5 topics to improve the educational intervention of the coach



1. Keep in mind the educational aims of practising sport

How can I educate for values through the practice of sport? What do I want to achieve from my actions?

Recommendation 1: Based on the characteristics of the group, identify the personal, interpersonal and civic goals which you wish to see be achieved.



2. Promote dialogue

How can I include the athletes in the reflections connected with their involvement in the activity and their resulting learning?

Recommendation 2: during the dialogues which take place during the training sessions, stimulate discussions using certain questions to guide these dialogues to enable athletes to reflect on their view of things.



3. Use language which promotes closeness, trust and understanding

How should I communicate in front of different publics and different athletes? It is adults who should adapt their language to the ability and understanding of children and young people. For example, instead of signalling the need to "learn how to work as a team!", an expression which, without concrete examples of what you want, ends up being too vague, finish the statement by saying, for example, "look at where your teammates are before continuing the game".

Recommendation 3: be careful with words, keeping what you say logically simple, and ask at the end if your message has been understood.



4. Take time to plan for the future and reflect on the past

How can I maintain control and carry out my educational aims? Planning and organising the teaching-learning process is very important, such as consulting, discussing and reflecting with the athletes on the goals and the importance of the contents worked on or to be worked on. In this way, it is important to ask how athletes experience and understand the games, learning activities and their relationship between each other.

Recommendation 4: visualise the holding of the training sessions, and imagine a space for reflecting and discussing with the athletes. Predict the type of questions which may be used to guide the resulting discussion.



5. Stimulate being responsible and proactive

How can I guide the athletes to assume responsible behaviour? How can I guide the athletes in their transformation from passive individuals to active individuals?

Recommendation 5: assign different responsibilities when organising training (forming groups, packing up material, taking on the role of "captain" or "referee"). All the athletes should take on all the roles, and they should also be responsible for managing the schedule of tasks.

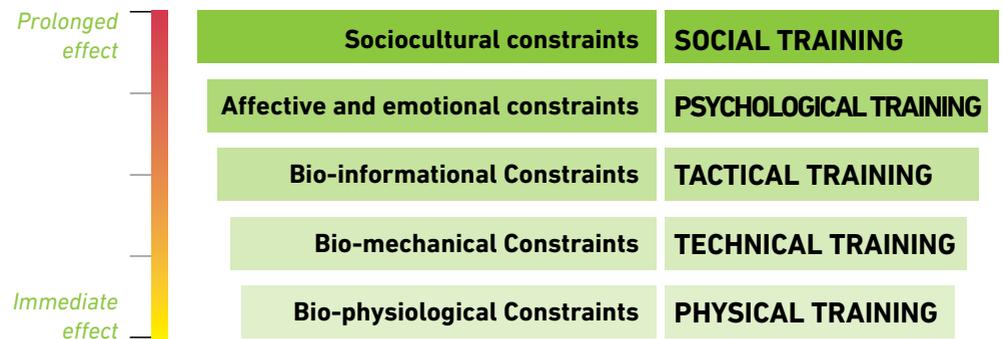
Teaching of values

Operationalising values in sports teaching

Sports training factors / Motor task constraints

We can recognise the existence of 5 factors and/or constraints which can be pedagogically and methodologically altered when carrying out different sporting tasks. These can also be understood according to the prevalence and impact of the corresponding stimulus.

From the point of view of the objectives and skills to be developed in the practice of sport, a single task always involves all of these factors/constraints. However, it is those involving the psychological and social factors (regarding the affective and emotional as well as socio-cultural constraints), as criteria for success in the applied tasks, which means that motor practice involves a more wide-ranging set of educational goals.



The content associated with each of the factors/constraints mentioned may be limited to the following areas:

CONTENT WORKED ON IN PRACTISING PHYSICAL AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES	
Physical-motor Aspect	Motor qualities.
	Technical and tactical qualities.
Psychosocial Aspect	Psychological qualities (knowledge of capabilities and limitations, spirit to overcome, self-control or discipline).
	Personal, interpersonal and civic qualities (healthy habits, autonomy, creativity, freedom, solidarity and ecology).

Adapted from Giménez, Abad & Robles (2009)

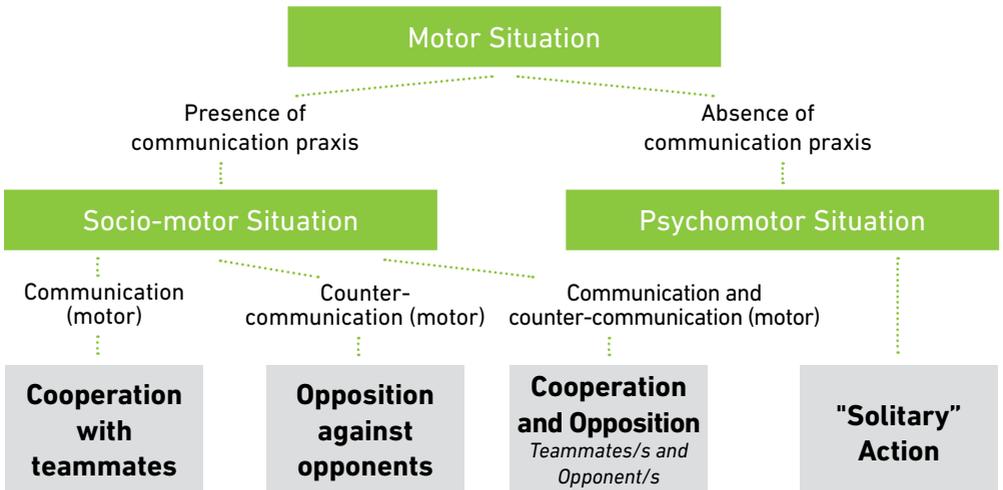
In line with this multifaceted nature of sporting activity, the contents of the different aspects may be considered and used as an educational aim.

How to operationalise the psychological and social factors of sporting activity?

It is important to understand the dynamics and the communicative potential of sporting activities as a starting point

The types of sporting activities may be described in terms of how the athletes relate to each other. It is through the different forms of interaction that cooperation practices (communication) and opposition (counter-communication) can be carried out which may form the basis for different sporting disciplines, besides situations where responsibility is strictly individual.

These forms of communication promote different types of interaction between the practitioners and show the potential for the development of different and more personal or more social values and skills.



Adapted from Parlebas (2001)



In a training context, which values can be worked on in classes and how can these be shown?

An example of the indicators and evidence based on the so-called Universal Values, from the Social Literacy model (LUDH, 2014).

PERSONAL		
VALUES	INDICATORS	EVIDENCE
Respect for self	Acceptance of healthy behaviour and rejection of harmful conduct.	Athletes show willingness to take care of themselves (hygiene, rest, food) and do this in a disciplined manner.
Responsibility	Acceptance and fulfilment of tasks and functions which are assigned within the group and in the training activities.	Athletes undertake their functions and duties with pride and discipline in an exemplary manner.
Autonomy	Confidence and independence in terms of their behaviour and responsibilities.	Athletes have confidence in their abilities and carry out the proposed tasks without the need of support from others.
Self-control	Balanced emotional management.	Athletes control their emotions when the situation is tense or adversarial, and are capable of recognising their own mistakes.
Overcoming	Constant resilient effort to improve their performances and behaviour.	Athletes strive to do more and better and persevere, not surrendering when faced with negative results or performances.
Respect for others	Acceptance and understanding, without prejudice, of the different conditions of peers and their diversity.	Athletes accept others as individuals, understanding their qualities and difficulties.
Solidarity	Involvement and selfless support of others in different conditions.	Athletes support those with greater difficulties and support teammates and opponents when they make mistakes.
Cooperation	Joint action by all to achieve a common goal.	Athletes value the group and recognise the importance of joint action to achieve common purposes.
Empathy	Development of a positive affective relationship with peers.	Athletes establish, nurture and develop friendships within their sporting context.
Respect for space	Care for the environment and surrounding materials.	Athletes look after their training and game areas, as well as the materials which they use and which are part of the game.
Respect for standards	Being just when complying with established standards.	Athletes respect and follow the rules of the game and the decisions linked to it.
Participation	Starting and carrying out the proposed tasks.	Athletes can take the initiative and enjoy participating.
INTER-PERSONAL		
CIVIC		

Teaching of values

What other intervention strategies can be used for the development of ethical values in sporting activity?

At the training level (responsibility of the coach):

- Observation/discussion of example situations (positive and negative) occurring during the training activities and their respective solutions.
- Joint resolution/reflection of ethical dilemmas that promote reflection in athletes with regard to certain behaviour and situations.
- Identification and instructional strengthening of the psychological and social component of each exercise (individual/collective, cooperation/opposition and the values associated with each aspect of praxis).
- Use of dialogue as a tool (frequent use of "debriefing" of values developed in practice).
- Carrying out "Role-playing"/"Role changing" exercises, particularly stimulating the responsibilities of each individual within the group-team.
- Use of rituals and demonstrative expressions of warmth and respect for others (teammates and opponents) and for the practice space (in the way that is done in the Martial Arts & Combat Sports).
- Use of great athletes and their image and message and their promotion as inspirational examples.
- Organisation of events where competition is playful with few selection criteria.
- Contracts/commitment between coaches and athletes concerning the fulfilment of behaviour goals for both. The Ethics Commitments made available by PNEd can be used for this (See "Pedagogy Resources" at <http://www.pned.pt>).

At the institutional level (responsibility of the entity):

- Definition of the values that guide and identify the entity, which should convey a positive image of sport and its educational foundation, which should also be part of the organisation's mission. These values should be reinforced in the contract/commitment carried out with the athletes but also adopted and shown by all stakeholders involved in the running of the organisation, and also shown in all such interventions (actions, publicity, information, documentation and resources). The values defined should be linked to indicators showing which can allow for suitable monitoring and evaluation.
- Demonstration of social activism, through the participation of the entity in community initiatives.
- Promote fair sports participation.
- Establishment of a bond and institutional action with other sporting and para-sporting organisations of a social and educational nature.
- Development of solidarity actions in and for the community.
- Arrangement of a day/event to celebrate sport and its values.
- Enhance and strengthen sporting activities promoting values.
- Involve other stakeholders (parents, managers) in a commitment to education, (signing of contracts/commitment). The Ethics Commitments made available by PNEd can be used for this (See "Pedagogy Resources" at <http://www.pned.pt>).

Teaching of values

Which games and exercises should be used to promote values through practice?

Believing that the practice of sport should be carried out in perfect harmony with the principles of ethics and that values, human relations, social inclusion, the encoded fight and equality of opportunities have been shown to be fundamental aspects of sporting heritage, the **LED's Play -Playing with Ethics** Module, which seeks to be a tool for the development of essential values to be simulated and experienced, both within sport and within society.

The **LED's Play - Playing with Ethics** Module, which seeks to provide support for teachers, coaches, sporting agents, those responsible for clubs and other educators in carrying out the following objectives with students and practitioners of the most varied sporting disciplines, particularly those who are younger:

- Promote and develop personal and social skills to improve intra- and interpersonal behaviour and attitudes, in relationships between peers, responsibility, friendship, mutual aid, well-being, self-confidence and reflexivity.
- Promote the understanding of sporting values to be felt and activated in a sustained manner within society.

The **LED's Play - Playing with Ethics** Module is based on an Experiential Learning methodology, which represents an enlarged perspective which highlights experiences favouring authentic learning as a necessary basis for the acquisition of important skills for human development which includes the methodological and pedagogical proposals in this document.

You can find different exercise suggestions on the LED Values Programme website (www.ledonvalues.org) as well as on the PNEC website (www.pned.pt) which are carried out to develop values in sport and personal, interpersonal and civic skills.

These suggested exercises include stimulated discussion/reflection on values and skills developed - the "debriefing" - is considered to be an essential tool.

In addition to the proposed exercises, which praise the co-operative, meaningful and inclusive aspects of motor games (and which are therefore targeted at a younger audience, these can be used in a more general way in sporting training sessions), it is possible to extend the spirit of the **LED's Play - Playing with Ethics** Module to any other task and sporting context. In this sense, any sporting exercise, if pedagogically guided, has the potential to be used as an educational tool for values and ethics in sport. Given this, the wealth inherent in different situations, training and competition can be enhanced by the application of the Experiential Learning methodologies promoted by this module.

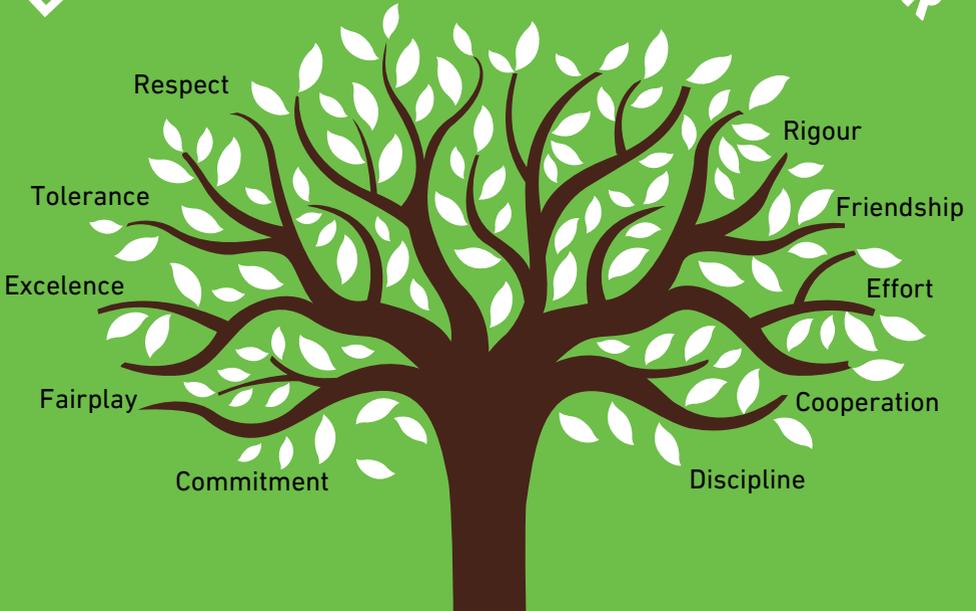


www.ledonvalues.org



ETHICS AS FOUNDATION OF CHARACTER

Sport as a tool



HABITS AND BEHAVIOURS





With the institutional support of:



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Move for values