



Policy Category	Advocacy
Policy Name	CDMFA Policy on Fair Play
Source	CDMFA RPP 2021, Football Canada Competition Review 2018, True Sport
Date	Approved 2023-03, 2024-03

1. CDMFA Commitment to Youth

The CDMFA's mission is to provide an experience that inspires excellence, promotes good health, develops character, and builds strong relationships that strengthen our community. We recognize a broad range of abilities and commitment among our athletes. We strive to provide age-appropriate instruction and competition within the constraints of time and resources.

CDMFA does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, national origin or religious affiliations. We seek to place athletes, with similar desires and objectively assessed abilities, together to maximize their enjoyment and development. We are committed to a fun and fair environment that develops self-confidence and leadership skills.

CDMFA and its coaches teach skills and strategy and contribute to building character in youth. Although competition and the desire to win is an important element of any sport, when good sport is sacrificed for winning at all costs, the sport, the athletes, the coaches, and the community lose something special. The future of our sport lies with great coaches and, as such, we are committed to recruiting, developing, and mentoring the best coaches available and to ensuring they deliver programming that is fair, safe, and open to everyone.

The objectives of CDMFA are:

- To develop football skills and teach athletes how to compete to the best of their abilities.
- To develop sportsmanship, fair play, pride, and achievement through involvement in football.
- To teach athletes, coaches, and parents the importance of respecting all those who come to play, including respect for teammates, coaches, opponents, referees, and officials.
- To provide a competitive sport experience that is enjoyable and rewarding for the athletes.
- To ensure that the athletes are developed in a way that promotes their safety and wellbeing.
- To create opportunities for everyone to play regardless of ability, gender, race, sexual orientation, national origin or religious affiliation.
- To foster an understanding among our athletes that their community supports their football dreams and the importance therefore of behaving as positive role models and in ways that contribute to improving the quality of life in their community.



2. What is meant by Fair Play?

It is important to recognize that the CDMFA's goal is to keep players in the game and to ensure they have a good football experience. The best way to do so is to find a level of play that suits their abilities, desired level of commitment and social needs.

Children develop physically, emotionally, and mentally at different rates and this needs to be taken into consideration when placing them on a team, assigning positions, and even assigning playing time. Players who are placed in positions that exceed their technical abilities, speed and desired level of commitment are more likely to have a negative experience and leave the sport. While players (and parents) may be upset in the short term if they are not playing their desired position, there is still room to explore possible options while they are growing and maturing.

Understand, respect, and follow the rules. Play with integrity - competition is only meaningful when it is fair.

2.1. “Fair Play” does not mean “Equal Playing Time During a Game.”

2.2. Fair Play means

- Everyone is welcome.
- Everyone has equal opportunities to practice, participate and learn.
- Everyone participates according to their own commitment level.
- Everyone has some responsibility to the team and their own learning

2.2.1. The safety of the player is the first and foremost concern of the Board and Executive of the CDMFA. The head coach of each member team in the CDMFA shall ensure that:

2.2.1.1. Every player will be properly dressed in appropriately certified equipment.

2.2.1.2. The players are adequately trained and taught the aspects of the game of football.

2.2.2. It is the responsibility of the CDMFA to ensure that any player who shows an interest in playing the sport of football should be given the opportunity to do so. Whenever possible, no one should be turned away.

2.2.3. Multi-Positional Play: learning to play multiple positions in the game.

2.2.3.1. For young athletes, learning the skills and techniques for more than one position is important for player development. Specialization at a young age can limit their development as an athlete and their opportunities as they grow both physically and move through the age divisions.

2.2.4. Two-Way Play: when certain players play both offense and defense positions in the *same* game.

2.2.4.1. This is encouraged at the younger age groups, as it helps develop athletes when they can try different positions. However, allowing athletes to play more



than their allocated reps is strongly discouraged, as it can over-tax the player causing fatigue and even burn out.

- 2.2.4.2. At the older age groups (especially teams with smaller rosters), coaches may use Two-Way play as a strategy in order to implement more of the playbook and give players opportunities at multiple positions. In doing so, coaches must be aware of the time of play for each player, so as not to overload players with too many reps.

- 2.2.5. Playing Time in a game situation is dependent on a variety of factors and will be determined by the team coaching staff.

- Age, developmental and skill level of the player and that of the competition
- Player commitment and mindset; during previous practices and at game time
- Player preparation: attendance at practices and team events, and for the older players, this may also include studying/learning the playbook or participating in film study.
- The positions learned and practiced by the player.

Player safety is paramount; not only that of the individual, but of their teammates. If a player is deemed not ready to take to the field, that decision would be made in the best interest of the team.

3. “Fair Play” Strategies by Age and Experience

Coaches, players, and caregivers need to understand where the player is at on the development scale and work together to implement the strategies that will help everyone grow.

- 3.1. First Involvement: Regardless of age, player is new to the sport. Fair play strategies include:
- Give new participants time to try new things and learn the rules/expectations.
 - Ensure fair access based on individual needs
- 3.2. Active Start: Fair play strategies for kids up to 6 years old
- Develop the skills for processing verbal directions.
 - Introduce the concept of being a good sport.
 - Develop self-regulation, waiting for your turn.
 - Encourage sharing and cooperative clean up.
 - Modeling appropriate language and tone
 - Learn to respect your space; clean up when you are done
- 3.3. FUNdamentals: Fair play strategies for kids ages 6-9 years
- Introduction of basic rules and why it is important to follow the rules.
 - Modify rules to make activities developmentally appropriate.
 - Introduction of “commitment;” punctuality, looking after your equipment, setting up/breaking down after a practice or game



- Learn from each other in small groups, or pair up players to create learning opportunities, appropriate skill levels.
 - Model respect and empathy.
 - Ensure players have opportunities to try a variety of positions, techniques and skills
- 3.4. Learn to Train: Fair play strategies for kids starting about age 8-9 (onset of adolescent growth spurt)
- Play by the rules.
 - Opportunities are earned through effort and commitment, not just natural ability.
 - Introduce discussions on ethical considerations, i.e... cheating
 - Encourage sportsmanship and reward it.
 - Model respectful behavior for officials, players, coaches, and caregivers.
 - Invite older participants to lead and teach skills to younger participants
- 3.5. Train to Train: Fair play strategies to build physical and mental capabilities for the duration of the adolescent growth spurt (ages 10+)
- Encourage reflection on personal actions and outcomes.
 - Promote ethical choices (no bending rules, no performance enhancing substances, no drugs, no cheap shots)
 - Identify team values and encourage shared accountability.
 - Discuss the importance of respecting the competition.
 - Set up training groups to mix and grow various skill sets.
 - Model inclusive behavior.
- 3.6. Train to Compete: Full time training for High Performance Sport (Nationals, International Competition)
- Outline expectations in advance, apply rules consistently.
 - Model fair play.
 - Learn to channel emotional energy.
 - Provide feedback and corrections in polite, respectful language.
 - Include participants in decision making to foster autonomy and engagement.
 - Provide opportunities for players to provide their thoughts and feedback.
 - Encourage open, safe, and constructive conversations about issues affecting sport.