

SDRCC Set to Focus on Dispute Prevention at the 2009 Canada Games

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) is proud to have recently signed an agreement with the Canada Games Council that will see the SDRCC involved in the coming 2009 Summer Games in PEI, as well as in all future Canada Summer and Winter Games. This agreement will not only allow for more consistency in dispute resolution from Games to Games, but it will also allow for dispute prevention and education services to be offered. In addition to a member of the SDRCC staff being present at the 2009 Games from August 19th – 25th with an information kiosk, the SDRCC will have its dispute prevention and resolution services available for the entire period of the Games.

The Canada Games are an exciting time for Canadian athletes, and as all eyes look towards Summerside and Charlottetown in August, there is great optimism for a very successful Games by all participants. Although dispute prevention is often left on the back burner when preparing for and participating at Games, it is nonetheless important to be cognizant of budding disputes that can potentially have a negative impact on athletes and coaches, and even be disruptive to the entire team.

The SDRCC recognizes that disputes are an unavoidable part of sporting life, and that disputes can take various shapes. This is why the SDRCC has recently intensified its efforts into dispute prevention, with the hopes to eliminate the disputes that are avoidable and to reduce the harmful consequences of disputes that cannot be prevented. In order to keep disputes from escalating to something more serious and potentially more damaging for the parties involved, the SDRCC will put the emphasis on Resolution Facilitation (RF) as a means of resolving, early on, disagreements and misunderstandings that can arise during the Canada Games.

Because RF is a process entered into voluntarily by the parties to settle a dispute, the outcome resides entirely in the hands of the participants. The resolution facilitator, a trained mediator of the SDRCC, will enable parties to properly communicate in a safe and confidential environment and will guide them towards a resolution of their own. Although RF resembles mediation in many ways, one of the main differences lies in the context of their use. Whereas mediation is often used between parties which are trying to resolve a fully developed dispute, the RF process can be used when disputes are at a more infant stage of development. As such, RF may prove, in the long run, to be the most important service offered by the SDRCC at the Canada Games.

The SDRCC strongly urges those athletes, coaches, managers, and volunteers to utilize the RF service if there should be any hint that a dispute is emerging, and well before arbitration is necessary. Canada Games participants are therefore invited to contact the SDRCC and request to meet with a resolution facilitator as soon as a conflict emerges.

The SDRCC can be reached through its website at www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca or by calling its toll-free number at 1-866-733-7767.