

TEACHING CHILDREN INTEGRITY

By Laura Robinson

FOCUS ON THE 8th
SESSION OF THE
CANADIAN OLYMPIC
ACADEMY

How do you get the fair play message across to the general public, and especially to children? Ivo Kasal (TCH) Fotosport silver FIAP medal.



Since 1983, the Canadian Olympic Association has held its national Olympic academy at universities across the country. In 1990, the University of Windsor Ontario hosted the school and the participants were to address the Dubin Report, the result of the federal inquiry that occurred after sprinter Ben Johnston tested positive in the 1988 Seoul Games.

Justice Charles Dubin is a highly respected Ontario Supreme Court Judge who is noted for his fair, and human decisions in Canada's judicial system. He was given the responsibility by the Prime Minister of Canada to inquire into the Canadian sport system, and try to determine why

Johnston felt it was necessary to take banned substances. He was also to recommend what changes could be made to encourage fairness in sport.

Athletes, sport administrators and journalists gathered for the week and in the

end put their stamp of approval on the traditional IOC concept of “fairplay”. During the week, the participants discussed the ideals of Olympism and how they relate to the Dubin Report.

These ideals often found their way into many Canadian minds as a number of witnesses during the Dubin Inquiry spoke about the inherently good values of sport, and how they can help us all become better people.

On the other hand, not everyone saw the Dubin Inquiry as the rebirth of sport. While the Dubin Inquiry was conducted, many sport advocates in Canada felt that the national despair and disappointment after Seoul did not help our country embrace Olympism and a sense of fairplay. Instead, there was a growing cynicism towards high-performance sport and the Olympics in general. The task now becomes how the fairplay message can be delivered to the public, and most importantly, children.

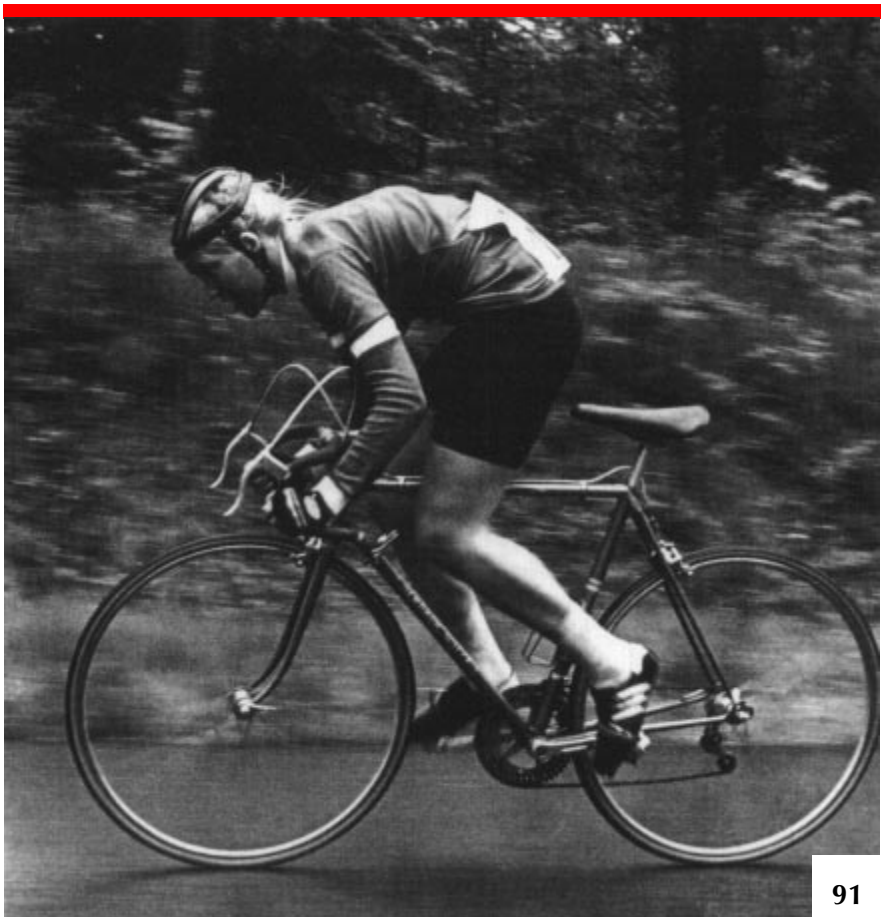
All levels of government in Canada have “fairplay” programmes, but they are not well represented in the mainstream media where children can watch pro athletes take temper tantrums, or in the case of hockey, beat each other up. Unfortunately, television stations and newspapers report in great detail about winning teams and how they had to “fight” their way into the winner’s circle, but we virtually never hear about athletes who win or lose in a fair-minded, honest way.

There is one athlete who receives enormous media coverage and balances the scale somewhat. We are lucky to have Wayne Gretzky, the best hockey player ever to skate across the earth, and a fairplay player who skates in the opposite direction of a fight. Gretzky is a wonderful example to impressionable young minds of what a true athlete is all about, and is respected throughout the world for his human qualities as well as his superb ability in ice hockey.

Olympic athletes, with the exception of a very few, are as committed to fairplay in sport as the great Gretzky is. But unless they make it onto the medal podium, Canadians rarely hear this important message from them. Amateur athletes are not “news” unless they win international events in Canadian sport media. But this trend is being questioned by former Olympic athletes and Academy graduates as they meet across the country to discuss the Dubin Report. Accepting the athlete as a whole person, and accepting sport as inherently good are two priorities of the Ontario session.

They may wish to join forces with the federal Commission for Fairplay which is sponsored by a national drug-store, Shop-

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per's Drug Mart through Sport Canada and the Coaches Association of Canada. The chainstore publishes booklets and posters that encourage athletes, coaches and parents to bring "integrity, fairness and respect" to the playing field.

In the coach's handbook it states that sport is an "ethical pursuit" that develops attitudes in children "towards themselves and others that will last a lifetime".

Canada is in our post-Seoul, post-Dubin Inquiry phase. It is up to all those who believe in "integrity, fairness and respect" in sport to make sure these three words ring in the hearts and minds of administrators, coaches, and athletes.

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This new Olympic body will have a number of goals to pursue, like spreading the Olympic ideals at a national level; promoting the Olympic Movement; developing and promoting physical activity, especially sport for all; the prevention and fight against violence; highlighting the social and cultural dimension of sport; undertaking studies and research on Olympism and the future of the Olympic Games; and the creation of an Olympic library and video library. The Academy plans to hold a national conference on the Olympic Movement once a year, possibly on the occasion of the Olympic Day Run.

It is also hoping to organize seminars on sports science, sports administration, Olympic education, the history of sport in Tunisia and throughout the world, etc.

CREATION OF AN OLYMPIC ACADEMY IN TUNIS

Mr Mohamed Saad, Secretary of State within the Ministry of the Interior and Vice-President of the Tunisian NOC, inaugurated last November the offices of the National Olympic Academy (NOA). Mr Saad used the occasion to stress the importance of the role of the NOA, indicating that its creation was part of the ongoing dynamic development which the NOC has been enjoying since the constitution of its new Board.

Following the example of fifty other countries before it, Tunisia has created a body which will consolidate the Olympic activity performed by the NOC. There were two main reasons behind the creation of this Academy: to spread the Olympic ideals aimed at developing the physical and moral qualities of the population; and the need to encourage young people in Tunisia to follow the principles of Olympism, by respecting the sporting ideals, the spirit of fair play and non-violence.