

develop a system which results exclusively from providing the means to meet the needs of athletes of both sexes and of various levels of accomplishment and levels of motivation.”⁽²⁾

Witnesses explained that this objective needs to be emphasized since resources are limited and should be allocated so as to maximize the benefit to the elements in the system most closely connected with the athlete. However, some witnesses expressed concerns about this objective. For instance, the Canadian College Athletic Association stated that making athletes the focus of the sports system would require radical changes. The Coaching Association of Canada considered that some NSOs might not be capable of providing all the services necessary to the comprehensive development of athletes at various levels. The Association also pointed out that the development and employment of coaches, who are perceived as the second most important individuals within any sport structure, may be neglected if the sports community concentrates on athlete-centred sport.

The Sub-Committee considers that the athlete must be at the centre of the sports system. The plethora of organizations, programs and funds must relate to the athlete in such a way that the whole system is organized to provide programs and services, advance the cause, the advocacy, the profile, the endowment of the athlete. The members of the Sub-Committee do not believe that this would alter the sports system radically but would rather make it more comprehensible and more effective. The Sub-Committee therefore recommends:

- 1. That, in all assessments, evaluations and programs, the athlete must be the essential element and the raison d'être of all related activities.**

B. Pursuit of Medals Vs. the Achievement of Excellence

From the very beginning of their athletic development, athletes feel pressure to win. The magnitude and the intensity of this pressure generally increase over time, when the athlete performs better and reaches higher levels of competition (from local, to provincial, national, and international). However, such pressure is often inevitable; athletes want to win and improve their performance. All of them, or at least most of them, want to be rewarded for their achievements; all of them wish to become winning athletes on the world scene.

⁽²⁾ Coaching Association of Canada, Letter, p. 2.