

## Commitments - The path has six stages



Young people need rules, pedagogical guard rails and guidance. But they also want to help shape their leisure activities.

The elaboration of a "Commitment" combines these concerns.

### The path has six stages

Young people need rules, pedagogical guard rails and orientation aids in order to be able to find their way in everyday sports life. However, they also want to help shape their favorite pastime. The development of a "commitment" combines both concerns.

While "commitment" describes a statement or commitment by an individual, "commitments" refers to intentions and agreement made together. So within a team, both forms can degenerate.

#### Leadership Catalysts

Children and young people like to emulate adults. The coach and the leader therefore have a significant position. They act as catalysts and significantly influence the beliefs and actions of the young athletes entrusted to them. Jugend+Sport places the leader personality at the centre of training and further education and has therefore developed a new teaching document on the subject of "Commitments". They form the basis for the following "six steps to added value in sport".

#### 1. Identify basic attitudes

Convictions, values and views determine our thoughts and guide our actions. At the beginning of a process, there is always an examination of your own basic attitudes. What matters to you personally? Do you put success above all else, perhaps encouraging "lazy tricks"? Or are fairness, consideration and humanity more important to you? You have to become aware of your values and views. The conviction must grow that jointly developed agreements are worthwhile and that they positively influence the cooperation in sports. Only in this way can you, as a trainer or leader, have a positive influence on the basic attitudes of the adolescents.

#### 2. Pass on values

Your attitudes influence the adolescents. You must be aware of this responsibility and promote sports fair core values in the training group. Only if you take a clear position (e.g. "Doping is cheating: on your opponent, on the sport and on yourself"), you will appear credible.

#### 3. Take a pulse

What's on the team's mind? What's on your mind? It's important that you feel where the "shoe pinches." The greater the concern, the more willing the group is to discuss their thoughts and

actions. Use a current situation (see article Commitment - Together) as a starting point. You observe how the defeat in a game leads to frustration and aggression in your team and that opponents and spectators are verbally and physically attacked. You derive possible principles of your own from this. These serve as a basis for later group discussions.

## 4. Collaborative process

If the agreements are to have a lasting effect, they must be entered into voluntarily and worked out together. After all, those who have a say in the process are more likely to stick to agreements made together and feel a sense of responsibility. Therefore, the group must be able to participate from the beginning, also in the elaboration and formulation of the commitments. Reserve enough time for this. Confront the players with your observations: "After the last game there was swearing, shouting and destruction of equipment. Referee decisions were constantly commented on and everyone was completely out of line on the pitch." Afterwards you pass on your own values and principles to the team, how you imagine fair behaviour on the pitch: "It's clear to me that winning is fun and losing is a frustration. But if you want to win, you also have to be able to lose. Strong, therefore, is he who remains fair even in defeat." The crucial question now is how the team will deal with victory and defeat in the future. You have small groups work out their own principles on how to deal with defeat without aggression. These principles are compiled and written down. WE-forms emphasize the commitment of each individual. The team decides which commitments are binding and gives the whole agreement the title "Fairplay - even after the end of the game", which is signed by everyone.

## 5. Living and keeping agreements

Drafting is not the end of the story. The commitments must also be lived: Posting in the clubhouse, presentation in the club organ, communication to the board and parents. This strengthens the will and the commitment to adhere to the agreements made together. Rituals (saying something at the start of the game, calling out to the coach during the game, singing a song after the match, etc.) can remind the group of the agreement and should be practiced during training. Important: New members must not be forgotten. They must be included in the arrangements.

## 6. Enforce agreements

Violations of commitments always occur. A distinction must be made between whether general rules of the game and laws have been violated, or whether the jointly made agreement has been violated. In the latter case, the offenders must be made aware of their behavior and seek their own "amends". Back to our example: You observe how a player, after several weeks of observing "fair play - even after the end of the game", gets upset at the referee's performance and kicks the drinking bottles away after the final whistle. You confront him with your observation, "I notice that you have trouble adhering to our group rules. How do you explain that?" The primary goal is to get clarification of the situation. Power struggles and hasty interpretations should be avoided. In conversation, you need to let the offending person know that you care how they feel and behave. For more serious offences, in some cases it is useful to refer to specialist agencies that can offer support to the young person and to seek help from counselling services. Sanctions against the intransigent must be proportionate. Fixed sanctions and financial compensation are inappropriate.

**Source Notes:**

**Content:** Youth+Sport, mobile 1, Dec. 2004, COMMITMENTS

**Authors:** Ralph Hunziker, Hans Ulrich Mutti, Anton Lehmann

**copyright:** [www.mobile-sport.ch](http://www.mobile-sport.ch)

**image:** [www.juropa.net](http://www.juropa.net)