

viaSport Commentary: B.C. sport organizations stand together to erase bullying in sport

Sport is a powerful catalyst for personal growth and community pride. It creates friendships and promotes fitness, while developing lifelong skills. Our goal is to build a sport environment where participants – athletes, coaches, volunteers, officials, parents, spectators and staff - at all levels feel safe and encouraged. This is why viaSport, along with B.C.'s top athletes, professional sport leaders and the provincial government, are aligning to #erasebullying in sport.

viaSport has reached out to the 73 provincial sport organization it funds on behalf of the Government of British Columbia. Representing 670,000 B.C. athletes and citizens, these organizations have been invited to sign a Declaration of Commitment and stand together to erase bullying in sport. By signing the Declaration, these organizations are committing to foster a positive sport environment and develop strategies to prevent and address bullying in sport.

The challenge is to address the many types of bullying and the places where it occurs. Bullying can include teasing, yelling and berating or isolating and excluding participants. It can happen on the field, in the dressing room, on the ride home, and through social media and text messages. Education and understanding are the keys to addressing these issues, which is why linking with the Province of B.C.'s erase bullying strategy is so important.

Everyone in this province can have a hand in building a thriving sport community. The more that we can spread the word to erase bullying in sport, the greater impact we will have. In a recent survey, 94 per cent of sport organizations in B.C. believe bullying in sport is a critical issue that can deter children from joining or staying involved in sports. We want to change these statistics to ensure no one is bullied while participating in sport.

We are determined to ensure that a safe, welcoming and positive sporting environment exists for all British Columbians. The more public support we get for this, the greater impact we can have. Join us today at viasport.ca/erasebullying and take the pledge to erase bullying in sport. Power in numbers can lead to real change.

Sheila Bouman is the CEO of viaSport, an independent not-for-profit organization. viaSport is tasked by the provincial government to be the lead agency responsible for promoting and developing amateur sport in British Columbia.