



— SPORT —

A MUST *for active* MONTREALERS

Although we are not always aware of it, sport is part of our daily lives. It affects the lives of thousands of people in Montreal on a daily basis. Sport aims to be inclusive, but if it is only associated with being competitive and achieving excellence, it loses some of its meaning. We therefore hope to highlight the many virtues and values of sport to ensure that it plays its proper role in making Montreal physically active.

While this is not an exhaustive list, we strongly believe that sport should reflect the values of fun, respect, inclusion, determination, a sense of belonging, team spirit and trust.

Sport is a form of physical activity that is regulated by the federations. The main motivations guiding the federations are safety, ethics and supervising recreational and/or competitive excellence. Depending on your needs and desires, sport is primarily a game that you participate in, however, we wish to consider it in all its dimensions; on the street, social, adapted, free, recreational, competitive, school-based or in the community, for young and old alike.

Sport acts as a facilitator and plays an active role in the social inclusion of people with functional limitations, vulnerable client groups or people from cultural minorities. It helps improve both physical and mental health, as well as self-esteem. Sport brings people together. It allows each person to achieve fulfilment according to his or her own abilities in environments that are adapted for everyone. Sport can thus contribute to developing social bonds, which are so important for society.

Sport allows us to make urban and natural public spaces our own. A sunny Saturday in February in Mont-Royal Park or a Friday evening during the summer on Lac-Saint-Louis is a real symphony of runners, skiers or paddlers. Are these active Montrealers aware that they are playing sports? Are they aware that these marked cross-country ski trails or canoe and kayak circuits are laid out according to standards and techniques? Or that the summer race for which this man is preparing is part of a circuit that is regulated by the federation so as to ensure his enjoyment in complete safety?

That is what sport is all about!

Sport helps give youth a sense of purpose in their lives and develop the skills required to reach their full potential. Winning and losing are secondary. Confidence, dealing with emotions, and communication are some of the skills that sport can help young people develop, and these skills will serve them well throughout their lives. Learning these skills is made possible thanks to the commitment and professionalism of properly trained coaches. Along with their parents, coaches are role models and sources of inspiration for many youths who need support. Some coaches are even able to use sports as a tool to encourage academic perseverance.



Sport is an important activity to cultivate social skills. Just imagine a teenage girl, who learned how to hold a hockey stick with her dad, now an amateur player in a garage league, having fun scoring goals with her new neighbours in an alleyway. Also imagine a couple in their sixties at the Saint-Laurent public tennis courts, who learned their forehands at the local tennis club and are now going to play with their friends.

That is what sport is all about!

Sport is inspirational. Remember the joy shared by a Montreal athlete on the podium at the Olympic Games. That joy made his country, his family, and his entire community proud. He first discovered skating at the outdoor rink in St-Alphonse Park with his family twenty-four years ago. Since that fateful discovery, various means have been deployed by schools, day camps, clubs, community centres, the federation, coaches, and governments to support him in both his victories and his defeats. The combination of all these have made him into a responsible, generous, educated, and inspiring adult for future generations.

Sport is a source of economic and social development. Think of professional sport with the Canadiens and the Montreal Impact. Think of the sports infrastructures built by the City of Montreal, that are used by citizens for both free and organized practice, and to host international competitions. Sport puts Montreal on the map as a great Olympic city. Remember Nadia Comaneci and the many legacies of the 1976 Olympic Games.

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Nevertheless, sport is not immune to the major challenges of our society. The latest news is not all positive: harassment, doping, and concussions are some of the downsides of sport. However, sport is a true metaphor for life. It has the advantage of being regulated by local, provincial, national, and international governments. It is led by caring individuals who confront these societal issues by implementing prevention, support, and sanction mechanisms to ensure that practising sport is a healthy, positive, and educational experience.

Sport, whether it is practised spontaneously or in an organized context, indoors or outdoors, integrates, develops, reconnects, inspires, and benefits the body, heart, and soul. Sport has many virtues, virtues that are so valuable and so fragile. For sport to deliver its best results, it needs recognition, support, and coaching.

We are all responsible for continuing to make sport an instrument for change. This can be achieved by demonstrating pride and inclusiveness, and by mobilizing around the same vision. Axis 3 partners of Montréal physiquement actif will work together to promote sport in all its forms, so that we do not forget that it has been an integral part of the active lifestyle of Montrealers for decades!

Have the sports reflex, join us, and get moving by practising sport!

Axis 3 Partners: emphasizing the practice of sport and events of

