

# IT'S TIME TO CHANGE OUR APPROACH TO YOUTH SPORT

Sport plays an important role in our society, contributing to national identity and wellbeing, but our country is facing a problem - too many young people are walking away, especially in their teenage years.

This is harming the health of young New Zealanders. It's also stopping many realising their full potential.

That's why we've joined together to take a stand. Our six organisations are committed to bringing the fun and development focus back into sport. We're determined to lead a change and to create a positive experience for all young people playing sport.

We're asking all those involved in the delivery of youth sport to remember this: young people play sport to have fun with their friends. If they stop having fun, they stop playing sport. Focusing too early on just one sport, putting winning before skills development and making young people train like professionals – these are the problems, not the solutions. Success should be defined by enjoyment, effort and improvement. There should be opportunities for all young people to be involved, not just those perceived to be most talented.

Individually and collectively we commit to:

- Ensuring all young people who play our sports receive a quality experience, irrespective of the level at which they compete.
- Leading attitudinal and behavioural change among the sport leaders, coaches, administrators, parents and caregivers involved in youth sport.
- Providing leadership to our sports in support of changes to competition structures and player development opportunities.
- Working with our sports and schools to keep minds open while identifying talent throughout the teen years, including reviewing the role and nature of national and regional representative tournaments to ensure that skill development opportunities are offered to more young people.
- Supporting young people to play multiple sports.
- Raising awareness of the risks of overtraining and overloading.

To maximise success, we are committed to working collaboratively with like-minded sports, schools, iwi and other organisations to encourage the widest possible change.

Let's ensure our young people develop a life-long love of sport and physical activity. Through commitment and teamwork, we can make a change.

**LET'S KEEP UP WITH THE PLAY. LET'S KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE IN SPORT.**

[sportnz.org.nz/keepup](https://sportnz.org.nz/keepup)



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