



An Open Letter to Sport

Based on over 300 survey responses collected by the
In Motion Network

April 2025

inmotionnetwork.org



Introduction

This is an open letter to sport. A letter that summarizes the stories and experiences of over 300 women who coach, officiate, work and volunteer in Alberta's sport system. A diverse group of women – women ages 16-65, from rural communities, small cities, and large urban centres. Women who identify as white, racialized, and Indigenous. Both disabled and non-disabled women. Women who are part of the 2SLGBTQAI+ community and women who are not. Women who represent 58 different sports – from the grassroots to the highest levels, and everywhere in between.

We invite you to engage deeply with this letter. To hold the nuances and complexities with care. To recognize that all of us working in Alberta's sport system have a responsibility to challenge norms, to shift patterns, and to transform structures. We must amplify the voices of those who have been overlooked, undervalued, and pushed to the margins. And while this letter is only one of the many steps we will collectively need to take, it is a step – one that moves us closer to creating a different story for sport. A story where we shift from prioritizing individual *being* to embracing collective *becoming*. Becoming something new. Becoming something where everyone can flourish.

This project was funded by the Women and Gender Equality Canada's Women's Program.



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

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To fully engage with the survey results please visit:

<https://www.inmotionnetwork.org/what-we-do/increasing-diversity-of-coaches/>



Citation: Tink, L., Chisholm, T., & Wright, L. (2025). *An Open Letter to Sport*. In Motion Network.

Dear Sport,

One of the greatest lessons you have taught us is that not everything we love will love us equally in return. We have given ourselves to you on countless evenings and weekends; on our children's birthdays; and on days when we should have stayed home in bed. We have bled for you, cried because of you, and felt inferior when around you. There have even been times when we have had to look over our shoulders in fear because of you. For you, we have lost wages, driven hundreds of kilometers, and engaged in countless hours of training. There is nothing you have asked of us that we have not done.

Why?

Because we love and value you. We love and value the experiences, opportunities, and challenges that exist because of you. We love and value the communities we get to be a part of because of you. We love and value who we are when we are with you. It is this love that has given us the courage to write this letter.

It is this love that has given us the courage to tell you we need you to change.

For too long, we have felt silenced, small, and dismissed in your presence. It is no secret that you originated as a domain exclusively for wealthy European men. And we understand that change takes time. But it has been almost 200 years. Almost 200 years of you ignoring, excluding, and policing us. Forcing us to contort ourselves to be accepted by you. To push our needs and desires aside. Demanding that we continue to give you more, while we receive less – less pay, less respect, less opportunity, and less representation. It's time for this to change.

It's time for you to start to love us the way that we love you.

It's time for you to examine your past and make commitments for a better future. It's time for you to ask yourself some difficult questions. Questions that get to the root of why, over the past 200 years, you have resisted so many opportunities for transformational change. Questions that encourage you to explore what you are capable of when you are at your best.

We are not asking you to explore these questions alone.

There are many people who are committed to doing the hard work of helping you change. People with transformative ideas and liberatory dreams. People with visions of belonging. People who are willing to forgive you for a past that has been harmful and exclusive. We urge you to embrace these people. To listen to their ideas. To acknowledge that, like us, they love you.

Please embrace this love so we can collectively begin to write a new story.

A story where we prioritize change, invite growth, and embrace becoming. Becoming something new. Becoming something where everyone can flourish.

With hope and gratitude,

Over 300 women who love you, but are asking you to change.