

## Declaration on the Elimination of Violence in Sports

### [Foreword]

With this declaration, the signing organizations reaffirm the meaning and values of sports at a time when society is struggling with the problem of violence in sports. This declaration represents our firm resolve to eliminate violence in sports in Japan.

Sports is a valuable cultural asset that human beings have created. Born from the pleasure of spontaneous physical movement, sports allows all persons to enjoy exercise regardless of age, sex and gender or physical abilities. Through sports, people feel shared emotions and develop closer bonds with each other. Sports instills a zest for life in young people and teaches them consideration for others, a cooperative spirit, a sense of fairness and the ability to follow rules.

Acts of violence such as physical punishment (including hitting, kicking and shoving), words and behaviors that deny persons' dignity, and threats, intimidation, bullying, offense, and sexual harassment contradict sports values and have put sports itself in a state of crisis. Sports values, grounded in the spirit of fair play and respect for humanity, cannot be reconciled with violence that is contrary to these elements. Acts of violence are never tolerable whatever the reason and must be eliminated from all aspects of sports.

The painful reality, however, is that violence has not been eliminated from sports in Japan. In the national team of women's judo, we have learned of a coach acting violently against his athletes. And in a most tragic case, a high school student on a sports team took his own life after being subjected to violence by his coach. The overzealous pursuit of victory and the kind of thinking that can justify violence as rigorous coaching are contrary to sports, and the values of sports, as a spontaneous and voluntary endeavor.

The signing organizations hereby declare their resolve to eliminate all types of violence from sports. We make this declaration to restore sports to its essential meaning and values, reaffirm the dignity of sports, and rebuild trust in the world of sports.

### [Declaration]

Many in our modern society enjoy sports, whether they are playing, watching or cheering for their players or teams. Sports has taken on an even more important mission in the 21st century: as an activity that nurtures bonds between people, sports is helping to ensure fairness and prosperity in places where people of different races, ideas and beliefs live together. Through the experience of physical activity, sports also fosters the capacity for sympathy and gives people opportunities to deepen their understanding

of other people and the environment. As such, sports is a great help to building our lifestyles in a modern society learning to coexist with the environment. Furthermore, sports grounded in the spirit of fair play and respect for humanity can be a powerful force for building a world of peace and goodwill.

Unfortunately, a difficult reality has emerged in the world of sports in Japan: acts of violence that have sullied sports values and threatened the mission of sports. Violence infringes on the rights of those participating in sports, turns people away from sports, and erodes the transparency, fairness and impartiality of sports. Violence in sports is shameful conduct that denies human dignity, destroys trust between player and coach and between players, and threatens the very existence of sports.

Violence must be eliminated from sports to protect those sports that people love and make a better sports reality in the future. It is the great duty of coaches, players and sports associations and organizations to protect sports values and fulfill the mission of sports in the 21st century by eliminating violence. In light of this, the signing organizations declare their intent to eliminate violence in sports as below.

#### 1. Coaches

- Coaches shall be aware that sports is a valuable cultural asset for humans and that violence is contrary to sports values, infringes on human rights and takes away the opportunity for sports, which is a fundamental right for all people.

- Coaches shall be aware that coercion or forcing obedience by violence does not lead to better athletes or teams, and shall reject the notion that violence is a necessary evil of coaching.

- Coaches shall consider the needs and nature of players, shall foster the ability of players to think and judge for themselves, and shall at all times communicate with players in a relationship of trust.

- Coaches shall foster not only their players' athletic skills, but their all-round development as well, and shall strive to nurture sportspersons with a spirit of fair play to help them take on the mission of sports in the 21st century.

#### 2. Players

- Players and especially athletes shall be aware of sports values, and shall be aware that by respecting and expressing those values, they are autonomous actors in a

position to offer people joy, inspiration and excitement and that they embody the universal human cultural asset of sports.

- Players shall endeavor to eliminate violence from sports in a spirit of fair play, respecting their opponents as themselves and not engaging in or tacitly allowing any act of violence.

### 3. Sports associations and organizations

- Sports associations and organizations have a duty to be aware of the cultural value and mission of sports, to protect the rights and interests of players, to consider the healthy mental and physical development and safety of players, and to work proactively to promote sports. To that purpose, they shall be aware that violence in sports infringes on the rights and interests of players.

- Sports associations and organizations shall endeavor to eliminate violence by ensuring operational transparency and strengthening governance. To that purpose, they shall maintain a system to study the state and causes of violence in their associations and organizations, to establish guidelines, training programs and so on concerning organizational operations and the elimination of violence, to establish consultation services, and so on.

Sports is indispensable to human health and cultural activities. Among its many benefits, it furthers young people's education, maintains and enhances human mental and physical health, gives people a sense of purpose, and promotes interaction among area people. The flourishing of global athletic events like the Olympics and Paralympics demonstrates the potential for international peace and human exchange through sports. The Olympic Charter, moreover, declares that the practice of sport is a human right, and that mutual understanding based on a spirit of fair play can tolerate no violence of any kind.

Nonetheless, acts of violence have occurred in sports activities in Japan. Undeniably, there have been times and situations when violence was tacitly approved. We have to take seriously the fact that coaches have sometimes acted violently in the name of rigorous coaching. Then, coaches must recognize the importance of supporting the voluntary activities of their players. They need to fully explain to players the objectives of their training techniques and what benefits players can expect to receive from them. They must also endeavor to make sure that players are able to pursue their sport

voluntarily.

Thus through this declaration, Japan's coaches, players and sports associations and organizations must work together in a new push to eliminate violence from sports.

Those of us living today have a responsibility for the future of sports. Knowing this, we who are concerned with sports must eliminate violence that undermines sports values and teach the virtues of sports as a universal human cultural asset.

[In closing]

The Japanese sports world has tried to rid itself of violence before. Clearly, however, these efforts have not been enough. This declaration expresses our resolve to reflect honestly on the past, confront the fact of violence in the Japanese sports world and work tenaciously to put an end to all types of violence.

Through this declaration, we affirm our respect for all those concerned with sports who have worked to protect players from violence in all types of sports activity and have enhanced the world of sports as a result. We share their love of sports and are inspired by their passion to help sports prosper. We, the members of the Japan Sports Association, Japanese Olympic Committee, Japan Sports Association for the Disabled, All Japan High School Athletic Federation, and Nippon Junior High School Physical Culture Association, along with the many people who enjoy sports, recognize that eliminating violence from sports is the duty of all who love sports and have benefited from its values, and we hereby declare that we will make every effort to eliminate all types of violence from sports.

Bringing this resolve to reality will require making this declaration well known to associations and organizations concerned with sports and all who love sports. Sports associations and organizations must furthermore establish concrete plans at an early date for eliminating violence from sports and must work continuously to implement them.

Moreover, it is our duty to partner with the International Olympic Committee and other relevant associations and organizations around the world to spread these ideals globally as we work to eliminate violence from sports.

To sustain this effort and bring it to fruition, we are hopeful that the Japanese government, public institutions and more will build upon their efforts up to now and understand the urgency and importance of this declaration, offering their active cooperation and support for the elimination of violence from sports.

Finally, we hereby recall the many distressing incidents that have happened in sports activities and state our firm resolve never to tolerate acts of violence in the world of

sports. It is our promise to foster sports as a universal cultural asset by eliminating all violence from it.

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Japan Sports Association  
Japanese Olympic Committee  
Japan Sports Association for the Disabled  
All Japan High School Athletic Federation  
Nippon Junior High School Physical Culture Association