



10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SPORT & CLIMATE



1. THE CLIMATE IS CHANGING

- The climate is dynamic; always changing. However, the scientific community has reached > 98% consensus (IPCC, 2018) that the rate of change is faster now than ever before, due to human activity.

A photograph of a beach heavily littered with plastic waste, including bags, bottles, and other debris, stretching from the foreground into the distance towards the ocean. The sky is overcast and grey.

2. SPORT IS IMPACTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

- Storms and hurricanes are damaging facilities, low-snow winters are causing ski events to get canceled, incidence of heat stroke is going up, surfers are riding over plastic.
- Not all sport organizations and athletes are affected by climate change the same way. This is called climate vulnerability.

3. SPORT IS CONTRIBUTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- Sport organizations produce extraordinary amounts of waste, consume resources heavily, and promote consumption culture.
- Sport participants and fans also have a carbon footprint.
- Sport is closely tied to tourism, transport, manufacturing, and other high-impact industries.





4. SPORT HAS A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM AND INSPIRE

- Sport has an unparalleled social platform
- People of all cultures, languages, religions, political affiliations, follow and participate in sport
- Sport enjoys daily global media attention
- Sport brands can influence fan behaviors

5. SPORT IS BEGINNING TO CHANGE (FOR THE BETTER)

- Many organizations have adopted certain sustainable practices (e.g. building new facilities to LEED standards, moving toward zero-waste, low-flow faucets, sensor-activated lighting, LED lights, etc.)
- Some organizations have started promoting their sustainability efforts. This is a good first step in fan engagement and education.

A photograph of two rugby players from behind, embracing on a grassy field. They are wearing white jerseys with red sleeves and blue numbers. The player on the left has the number 9, and the player on the right has the number 6. The background is a blurred crowd of spectators in a stadium.

6. MORE CHANGE IS NEEDED

- Being sustainable means more than just recycling and turning off the lights.
- We must be wary of token initiatives, and greenwashing.
- Systemic change is necessary.



7. SUSTAINABLE CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS REQUIRES A FULL COURT PRESS

- Management must buy-in
- Employees must buy-in
- Volunteers must buy-in
- External stakeholders (e.g. fans) must buy-in



8. ATHLETES ARE GOOD ADVOCATES

- Athletes (especially outdoor athletes) experience the effects of climate change on a daily basis (hotter weather, less snow, plastic in the ocean, eroded trails and playing surfaces)
- Mohammed Ali (civil rights), Billie Jean King (women's sport, pay equity), USWNT (pay equity) have shown sport can spark conversations.

9. SEVERAL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ARE WORKING ON THIS PROBLEM

- Sport and Sustainability International
- Protect our Winters
- Green Sports Alliance
- Sport Environment Alliance
- EcoAthletes
- UN Climate Action Group

10. YOU MUST BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

- Learn about the climate crisis.
- Calculate your carbon footprint
- Consider ways to reduce your footprint
- Advocate for the planet at school, at work, at sport events, in the streets, at the polls, and in your community.



To learn more: www.sportecology.org