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.
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.
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.
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