

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**November 26, 2008**

## **Ontario Encourages Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation Programs**

**Toronto:** Sport and recreation organizations across Ontario will have better insight into how to create tobacco-free policies, thanks to a new website launched on Friday, November 21, 2008.

The new site, [www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca](http://www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca), encourages community sport and recreation organizations to adopt tobacco-free policies. It provides information on how to successfully create, promote, and enforce tobacco-free sport and recreation policy and awareness programs. The site also allows organizations that have made the decision to go tobacco-free to share their experiences and success stories.

“Sport organizations have the power to embed healthy living into their programming and directly impact athletes of all ages,” said Brandy Tanenbaum, Executive Director of Sport4Ontario. “We encourage all sport organizations to create an environment that promotes and supports tobacco-free participation.”

Creating tobacco-free sport and recreation events means that athletes, coaches and spectators refrain from using any form of tobacco product while participating in the activity. Health Units across the province have begun to work with their local sport and recreation clubs to put these policies in place.

“Athletes, coaches, and sporting organizations that choose to be tobacco-free are positive role models for Ontario’s youth,” said Susan Kitchen, Executive Director of the Coaches Association of Ontario. “We encourage all coaches around the province to lead the way in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.”

In 2002, in response to a global appeal for action, the theme for the World Health Organization’s annual World No Tobacco Day was “Tobacco Free Sports--Play it Clean”. The World Health Organization and its partner organizations have since launched a campaign to clean sports of all forms of tobacco — from tobacco product use, and exposure to second-hand smoke and to tobacco advertising.

Ontario’s youth are joining this international movement to break the connection between tobacco products and sport and recreation during the 2nd annual Advocates Challenging the Tobacco Industry in Ontario Now (ACTION) Week, Sunday Nov. 23 to Saturday Nov. 29.

The website was created to build on existing provincial effort and increase the number of sport and recreation organizations that support tobacco-free policies. It is a joint effort between provincial sport and recreation organizations and local public health agencies in Ontario. For more information, visit [www.playlivebetobacco-free.ca](http://www.playlivebetobacco-free.ca).

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