

Great diversity – equal treatment

*The Swedish Floorball Federation's Equal
Treatment Policy*

Introduction

There ought to be no need for this policy. Because we ought not to be in a situation where we have to spell out a policy to ensure what ought to be self-evident: that everyone involved in floorball in Sweden should have the same opportunities, the same obligations and the same right to develop regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. Sadly, we need such a policy. Floorball in Sweden must become more equal and offer more equal treatment. But equal treatment is not just a matter of justice. It is also an important strategic issue for the future. Equal treatment is not just a “necessary evil”; it is an essential condition for the sport’s development.

We cannot afford gender-inequality in sport

Sport is an important arena for young people growing up. It provides them with a focus and a place where they develop their own identities and learn to manage social codes and relationships. The spectrum of leisure activities that people can choose from is extensive and constantly growing. In this fierce competition, Swedish Floorball seeks to provide an attractive and democratic alternative. This applies to players, administrators, elected representatives, referees, parents, politicians, sponsors and spectators.

Women and men, girls and boys are socialized in accordance with different gender roles and gradually develop a sexual identity which is shaped by their upbringing, as well as the norms and values of their communities and surroundings. Sport in general and floorball in particular are very much part of this process and they need to work actively to ensure that girls and boys are given the same opportunities for practising their interest in floorball. Research indicates that there is a greater risk in single-sex “arenas” of unhealthy values being strengthened and idealized. To ensure a more healthy activity we need both men and women active in floorball arenas.

Swedish floorball aims to bring out the best in those who make an active commitment to floorball. It is important that floorball should reflect the wider society in which female and male are expected to be represented at all levels. This enables us to learn to communicate with people of the opposite sex, resulting in a more creative and efficient climate which is responsive to more people’s different backgrounds and experiences. Not to make use of both men and women is regarded as wasteful of both human and economic resources. It is important to understand that different people have different interests and needs and, accordingly, that it matters who makes decisions, for example when allocating resources. Men are often in a majority in decision-making posts and this can result in proper attention not being given to women’s skills and experience. If it is to get the best out a situation, sport cannot continue to discriminate against certain groups of leaders or potential leaders. Competence does not depend on gender. Instead one needs to ask what competence one is looking for in order to be sure of what one then needs to look for. What is the image of the club when recruiting leaders and what is on offer as an added value? What skills are really asked for when recruiting elected representatives and leaders?

More players, leaders and elected representatives?

Recruitment is one of the major development areas of sport. It is important to create a conscious policy for recruitment to the various positions at all levels in floorball in that this

will lead to a broader recruitment base which will make it easier to ensure that the necessary expertise is available in the club. The recruitment methods that are employed have a decisive influence when it comes to opportunities for recruiting more leaders as well as leaders from the sex that is underrepresented. To proceed, as is often the case today, by recruiting from acquaintances and personal networks can seem simple and convenient. But it is doubtful whether this strategy always leads to the most competent people being recruited. In fact it frequently discriminates against the sex that is underrepresented in an organization and that risks never actually receiving offers.

Floorball's central operations take place in the midst of the active players with the help of numerous fantastic coaches and leaders. A conscious strategy will facilitate work on a policy on values and harmony within floorball circles in Sweden. It will also increase the possibilities of recruiting more players, coaches, referees and leaders for our operations.

Who are we aiming at?

Players: It is important to create an operational culture which is inclusive and lets everyone be themselves and not feel a need to live up to stereotypes (e.g., heterosexual, bitch, immigrant or homosexual). Sport is an arena in which one learns to relate to what is classed as female or male. One way is to ensure that all the people concerned, players and parents for example, are aware of the aims of Swedish floorball, its vision and mode of operation, so that they also have an opportunity to feel that they are taking part by learning to see the whole and to understand their role in the club. This is also important with regard to getting more people to choose floorball rather than other sports.

Coaches: Recruitment – parents become coaches. In the future we are going to need more coaches for each team. The time that people are able to give to voluntary activities will decline. And so Swedish floorball will need more committed helpers. If we are going to be able to recruit more leaders to our sport, we need to make it attractive for people of both sexes to become leaders and coaches.

Elected representatives: There is an increasingly unanimous opinion that the time that people will devote to voluntary work will decrease. Thus we need to involve more people in the task of running and developing our clubs based on the extent to which they are able to commit themselves. If we are to be able to recruit more elected representatives we need to make becoming an important organizer in the club an attractive task. Everyone's experiences are different, as are their interests, needs and modes of expression; and so it matters which people actually take part in making decisions, for example when resources are to be allocated.

Referees: There is a constant need for new referees. Turnover of referees is high. So we need to work at recruiting more referees and at persuading referees to carry on for longer periods. If we are going to succeed in recruiting referees, the environment in which they work needs to be an open and democratic one with room for creativity and diversity. Arenas that have a majority of one particular sex are more likely to lead to gender stereotypes being strengthened and idealized. Perhaps pairs of referees consisting of a woman and a man would lead to fewer incidents and a more positive climate in floorball matches.

Role of the local authority: Sport in Sweden today is largely dependent on the use of facilities provided by the local authorities. In the future, local politicians will make greater

demands on the activities that receive their support and funding. And so it is important to be able to show that the club's activities are based on democratic principles and that sport is aware of its social responsibilities and is generally trustworthy.

Sponsors: Today sport is increasingly concerned with visibility in the media buzz. This means that sport has to increase its visibility in order to attract sponsors. Companies currently consider ethical issues when deciding on sponsorship deals. So Swedish floorball needs to be able to show that it really is a sport for everyone.

Spectators: We want floorball to attract a wide range of spectators and for everyone to feel welcome. This means that we need to ensure that our events are attractive to both women and men, young and old. Currently, it is our elite-level matches that are Swedish floorball's major public face. A development in the direction of a more egalitarian situation for floorball requires both "floorball for all" activities and elite events. Elite-level floorball with the national team and the elite league at the apex, give rise to visions and generate media attention, models, favourable conditions for sponsoring and much else. By maintaining elite floorball for both women and men at the highest level we can strengthen our brand and show that floorball is both democratic and non-discriminatory.

Involving the whole of Sweden

In order to continue its current, vigorous development, everyone in Swedish floorball needs to work towards promoting Sweden's best sport.

- Floorball is one of Sweden's largest sports in terms of numbers of players. But we still have a vast potential for increasing our numbers since only one in four of our members is a girl or woman. So we need to encourage our clubs to recruit more players and leaders.
- By means of club-development programmes we can help clubs to ensure that the activities are gender neutral. This is particularly important in Human Resource Management (HRM) and in recruitment but also when developing goals and policies. How should we be collaborating with SISU – Swedish Sports Education in reaching out to our clubs?
- In order to ensure that the clubs are promoting these goals, the Special Sport District Federations need to be engaged in the work. By raising the issue in each respective district and setting a good example.
- Our elite and national-team players can provide good models that clearly illustrate our basic values.

Responsibility towards Swedish sport

The Swedish sports policy document *Idrotten vill*, published in 1995, contains aims and guidelines for the entire sports movement. It stipulates that sports activities should be organized in such a way as to promote comradeship and a sense of security in a democratic structure. Sports for women and men are to be equally valued and treated with equal priority and resources are to be allocated in a fair manner. Aims and priorities for reaching the various goals that have been set up for the activities are to be laid down at the highest level in every club and federation or association. There needs to be serious discussion of how priorities are to be made between different activities and purposes so that everyone in the club or federation can work towards the same goals.

Conditions for success

Participation and responsibility

It is the Swedish Floorball Federation's board that is responsible for ensuring that all elected representatives, committee members, employees, Special Sport District Federations and clubs are cognizant with the federation's gender-equality policy and for ensuring that it is adhered to.

Structural changes

Serious work with gender-equality issues often leads to the need for various formal changes. Changes have to be made in the formal structures to avoid dependence on specific persons. This may involve producing gender-related statistics on an annual basis, or annually monitoring how the policy document for the activities is being followed as well as efforts to realize the policy throughout the organization. The leadership, board or executive committee are important organs in this work and need to take a lead in order to make things easier for people who are active at club level. This makes it easier for changes to penetrate throughout the organization and to become permanent.

Routines and procedures

Perhaps the most important part of the work of increasing an understanding of gender equality and developing activities is through surveys or evaluations. With questions relating to fundamental values and credibility there is often a notion about how things are that is really based on private opinions. By evaluating an activity with regard to a specific question one can document the situation in black and white and, in future discussion, people can refer to actual figures or other data. This generally leads to a more constructive treatment of the issue.

Methods

Knowledge

Without a knowledge of how sex and gender are created it is impossible to work towards gender equality. At present, gender equality is very rarely discussed which means that the first – and perhaps most important step – is to begin discussions at all levels in sport.

An important task is to look at the Swedish Floorball Federation's working methodology from the perspective of gender equality. Initially one can work with attitudes and values. The aim is to focus on and discuss attitudes and values in order to create an environment that suits both girls and boys. Working with personal values generates energy and inner motivation among elected representatives, employees and players.

Evaluation

The 3-R method is a tool for analyzing an operation from a perspective of gender-equality and for producing the information necessary for making the operations of the Swedish Floorball Federation even more gender equal. The 3R method looks at three areas: Representation, Resources and Realia. The areas to be evaluated range from speaking time and number of spoken contributions at meetings, financial support, internal and external meetings, education, recruitment methods and increased value to checking representation. The method produces answers as to who gets what and under what conditions.

Representation R1

This looks at how many women and how many men are decision-makers, executors and users within the ranks of the Swedish Floorball Federation. Representation is studied at all levels and in all parts of the organization. The answers give an indication of the distribution by sex at all levels of the decision-making process and the operations.

Resources R2

This step looks at the distribution by sex of resources within the organization. How are money, time and space or information allocated between women and men? How are special programmes localized and which matters are given precedence? The allocation of resources in the operations is evaluated from the perspective of women and men.

Realia R3

Here the results of the evaluations in the two other Rs are analyzed in order to give visibility to the norms, values and measures of quality that steer the activities which can be difficult to define because they are often seen as being normal and natural. Who or what people form the norm in Swedish floorball? Whose needs are provided for by the activities? Hereafter discussions are to lead on to explanations of possible gender patterns in representation and resources. The aim is to establish whether the allocation of resources is motivated by the goals of the federation's operations. That is to say, how can the pattern of gender distribution in representation and allocation of resources be explained and is this reasonable when compared with the aims of our operations?

Keywords with definitions

Equality or social equality proposes that relations between individuals and groups in society should be fair or just and that every person is of equal value regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, etc.

Gender equality means that women and men have equal rights, opportunities and obligations in all essential areas of life.

Gender or social sex posits that a person's sexual identity is shaped by their upbringing, norms, values and environment. Gender is used to describe interpretations of social and cultural sexual identity.

Gender equality in sport posits that girls and boys, women and men, shall have the same rights, obligations and opportunities and shall share influence and responsibility.

Gender perspective is used in analyzing the importance, content and consequences of a person's sex as regards individuals and activities.

Gender power structure is the structure that places women and men in an unequal power relationship in which men are normative and women are subservient to men.

Quotas are used to give the underrepresented sex precedence to posts and positions. Quotas are one aspect of affirmative action that gives precedence to the underrepresented sex. A risk with using quotas is that the people given precedence may feel that they have gained their

positions simply by their being female or male and not because of their competence. The advantages are that quotas ensure new models that can lead to more efficient organization.