Children’s and coaches about *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC)

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**Abstract**

This paper examines Swedish child sport in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In 1989, United Nations (UN) decided that children under 18 years old needed a convention for special care and protection. UNCRC is a legally binding international instrument that incorporates the full range of human rights for children. The Swedish Sport Confederation has since 2009 included a child rights perspective in their policy guidelines for child sport in Sweden. This paper draws on a study of children’s and coaches perceptions about children’s right to express their opinions, right to life and development, right to a non-discrimination environment, right to protection from any forms of violence and that the best interests of the child is a primary consideration (UNCRC: article 2, 3, 6, 12 and 19). Data were gathered through interviews with 12 children and 6 coaches from the team sport floorball and the individual sport equestrian. Written life stories were also collected from each child. The preliminary results show that issues related to children’s rights are considered, by coaches as well as children, to be of most importance but it is never or seldom discussed in the clubs or in their sport environments. The results illuminate that neither children nor coaches are aware that the children’s rights according to UNCRC also apply to children’s sports. One difficulty to act seems to be that sport clubs do not have developed actions plans to separate a coach from his or her task if they do not follow children's rights. Overall this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges for sport clubs to work according to children’s rights.

**Keywords:** Child sport, Convention on the Rights of the Child, gender, generation, coaches

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