

BALANCING SPORT AND ADOLESCENT LIFE: THE HUMAN BEFORE THE ATHLETE

SELF-AWARENESS

Although still developing, self-awareness is essential for young people, as it helps them navigate the challenges of adolescence, such as physical changes, social relationships, and academic or athletic pressures. Self-awareness is also closely linked to self-esteem, as it allows individuals to recognize their strengths.

Taking on challenges and trying new activities helps deepen self-awareness. Valuing sport while also making space for exploring other activities and maintaining balance across different areas of life (social, academic, relational, cultural, etc.) allows young people to better discover the person they want to become and contributes to their identity development.

Student-athletes' experiences: insights from the field

- **Multiple identities:** An athlete is not only a sports person; they are also a student, a friend, a son, a sibling, and a developing adolescent who benefits from building their identity and interests both within and beyond sport.
- **Real overload:** Too many hours of sport can negatively impact energy, mood, identity development, and mental health.
- **Well-being first:** Emphasizing the importance of life outside of sport helps young people feel more complete and motivated, allowing them to return to their sport more present and engaged.



CONCRETE ACTION

Create a relational space disconnected from performance.

- Create the weekly “60-Minute Off-Sport Challenge”: once a week, each player spends 60 minutes doing an activity unrelated to hockey (music, cooking, games, reading, walking, etc.).
- Players take a photo or video of their activity (simple, no performance involved).
- At the next practice, each player chooses one activity from a teammate that they would like to try someday, simply by naming it.
- The team celebrates the diversity of interests—not performance in the activity.

