



THE SIGA YOUTH COUNCIL SURVEY 2025 Edition

NOVEMBER 2025
Sport Integrity Global Alliance

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Emanuel Macedo de Medeiros,
Global CEO, SIGA
Chairman & CEO, SIGA AMERICA
Executive Chairman, SIGA EUROPE
Chairman & CEO, SIGA LATIN AMERICA



2. About SIGA

SIGA is the world's leading organization for Sport Integrity. We are creating a new landscape for the sports industry by delivering independent global rating and certification for World Sport to ensure it is governed and operates under the highest integrity standards: The SIGA Universal Standards.

Funded by our Members, SIGA is a not-for-profit global independent organization with one aim: To ensure the sport industry is governed under the highest integrity standards so that the values of sport are protected.

SIGA is the only organization to bring together sport, governments, academia, international organizations, sponsors, business, rights holders, NGOs, and professional services companies, from every region in the world, around a common cause of fostering greater integrity throughout sport.

SIGA is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, as a not-for-profit association, and comprises the following continental subsidiaries: SIGA AMERICA, SIGA EUROPE, SIGA LATIN AMERICA and SIGA ASIA.

For more information on SIGA, including its vision, mission, and reform agenda, please refer to the website and FAQs.

To contact SIGA regarding this research project and other inquiries, please email comms@sigasport.com.



GENEVA



LISBON



SÃO PAULO



WASHINGTON DC



DUBAI

3. A Welcome Message from the SIGA Youth Council

On behalf of the SIGA Youth Council (SYC), it is our esteemed honour to share this research project into the importance of integrity in the sports industry. This is the first time I have been involved in an SYC report since taking on the role of Co-Chair and Research Lead last year, and being able to work with influential youth voices to create insight of this nature is exactly why I wanted to join the Youth Council and take on those responsibilities.

Without wanting to jump straight to the conclusion from the outset of the report, there were two very clear messages that came through from those aged 18-30 who kindly supplied data, representing the views of sports fans, players, executives, academics any many more from all around the world.

The first is that they believe that good governance in sport is crucial if we want to have true faith in sporting integrity. The second is that development and education relating to sports integrity for young people is equally paramount if we're to ensure that everyone shares the same cultural and sporting values to keep sport honest, transparent and competitive on performance-based merit.

These findings align with previous research that I have published in my primary role as Research Manager for EPIC Global Solutions, who specialise in providing experience-based education into gambling-related harm, which helps to underpin awareness of (and adherence to) sporting integrity. The shared values and aspirations between our respective organisations are reflected in this report and are a natural progression from EPIC's Gambling Harm Prevention in Sport Review white paper (February 2023) which outlines what best practice for mitigating integrity and problem gambling issues looks like at all levels of sport.

This report focuses on how this can be applied for the specific benefit of the youngest participants in adult sport – on and off the field – and reflects the issues that they have to deal with in the field of integrity, including subjects like online harassment and racism, which we all strive to eradicate from not just the games we play, but our lives.

This report is published as a guide for the sporting ecosystem to learn from the findings and pull together to make our competitions fair, inclusive and trusted by all. The Sport Integrity Global Alliance Youth Council hopes that those with the authority to make the recommendations come to life can and will enact the findings of our report to make that a reality. We look forward to seeing this happen and will be delighted to engage further with individuals and organisations with the power to do so.

Anca-Maria Gherghel, Co-Chair & Research Lead, SIGA Youth Council

4. Project introduction

Integrity plays a significant role in the sports industry as it reflects key sports-related values such as equality on the playing field, respect and honesty (Haberfeld & Sheehan, 2013). Researchers argued that morality and values in modern sports are crucial, especially when it comes to young athletes and their development (Yaffe et al., 2021). The growth of the sports industry led to professionalization and commercialization which often emphasizes the need for wins over participation, creating conflicts between values and functionality (Yaffe et al., 2021). Athletes face a number of ethical challenges related to fair play, teamwork, respect, integrity and discrimination based on race, gender, disability or sexuality (Cobley et al., 2012; Hanson & Savage, 2012; Dangi & Witt, 2017; Houston, 2017). Therefore, it is important to listen to the voices of youngsters to identify the most effective ways to overcome those challenges taking into consideration the numerous cultural and sociological differences between the different age groups.

This research project was formally conceived by the SIGA Youth Council members to conclude the 2024/25 year, highlighting the importance of listening to young people's voices around integrity. The project covered the 2nd edition global survey aimed to explore experiences, perceptions, and ideas of young people aged 18 to 30 years old on integrity in youth sport. The results of the survey will be used to enhance SIGA Youth Council's initiatives and programmes, inform policy and decisions that impact the future of sport and empower young people and the broader sporting community to champion integrity.

As social media metrics increasingly dictate behaviour, ages 18-34 remain a globally coveted demographic to assess engagement resonance (Kailath, 2017). In the context of research pertaining to sport, there is an emphasis on discoveries among young athletes under the age of 18 and executives typically age 35 or older (Harwood et al., 2015). Despite the highly sought-after perspectives of individuals aged 18 to 34 years old, there is a void of research centered on this demographic and on the various roles they occupy within the sporting landscape. This is one of the gaps that this report aims to address.

This research project was crafted by a collective of leaders in sport aged 18 to 30 years old, with an intentional lens on the various leadership roles in sport individuals in this age group occupy. We aspire to lead by example to embark on a project that trusts emerging professionals to know what they expect out of their experiences in sport and chart their own path to determine their own definitions of sport integrity and through what means they seek to uphold said standards, policies, and procedures.

5. Methodology

This study involved the collection of quantitative and qualitative data through an online survey designed in Survey Monkey, using a premium account. Integrity is a topic of sensitive nature (Sieber & Stanley, 1988) and those completing the survey were asked to share their experiences with integrity issues which could trigger negative emotions for them. Therefore, SIGA Youth Council's research team made the decision to design an online, completely anonymous survey and have taken steps to ensure participants will be treated with respect and care. Online

surveys save time, money and allow a wide geographical coverage (Denscombe, 2014). Using this method of data collection allowed a wider reach, getting young people from all around the world to participate in the research. Although the survey was completely anonymous, those interested in staying in touch with the Youth Council were asked to leave their email addresses if they are happy to be contacted.

The survey was launched in December 2024, and it was shared via LinkedIn and Instagram. The data collection was stopped in June 2025. The survey was created in English, but respondents were encouraged to write the answers in whatever language they felt comfortable writing in. Questions were adopted from the 1st edition of this project but were adjusted by the research team according to the current cultural landscape and new 'hot themes' that were deemed important.

The survey was divided into three sections consisting of closed and open-ended questions. A copy of the survey can be found in the appendix. The first section covered demographics questions such as age, gender, country of birth and country they currently live in if different, and whether they have a disability. They covered factors that may impact an individual's relationship and access to sport and sport integrity (Harwood et al, 2015). The team decided to include an option for respondents to identify as having a disability due to the lack of inclusive and accessible language in surveys (CDC, 2019). The term 'disabled' has undergone a period of reclamation within disabled communities. In academic circles, the phrase "differently abled" has been used to discuss people with disabilities. However, heeding from disabled communities, the term disabled is not inherently negative and should not connote something detrimental. As such, we decided to allow respondents to identify whether or not they have a disability. Race is often an option for participants to self-identify. The Youth Council decided not to include race in our survey due to its highly subjective nature as a social construct and in consideration that certain countries and cultures may not include race as a means to identify oneself (Steinbugler et al., 2006).

The second section covered questions exploring perceptions and knowledge of sport integrity e.g. how well they feel they understand issues regarding sport integrity. It included a variety of questions' styles. For example, when asked what their relationship with the sport was, participants were able to select all responses that applied to them as some might be athletes but also sports fans at the same time. The premium Survey Monkey account also allowed specific features to be used. This included the skip logic feature to increase the reliability of responses and ensure participants only complete questions that are relevant to them. For instance, those who said that they believe young adults have a role in influencing change in sport integrity were directed to an open-ended question to explain why they believe that is the case and those who selected that they do not believe it, they were directed to another question.

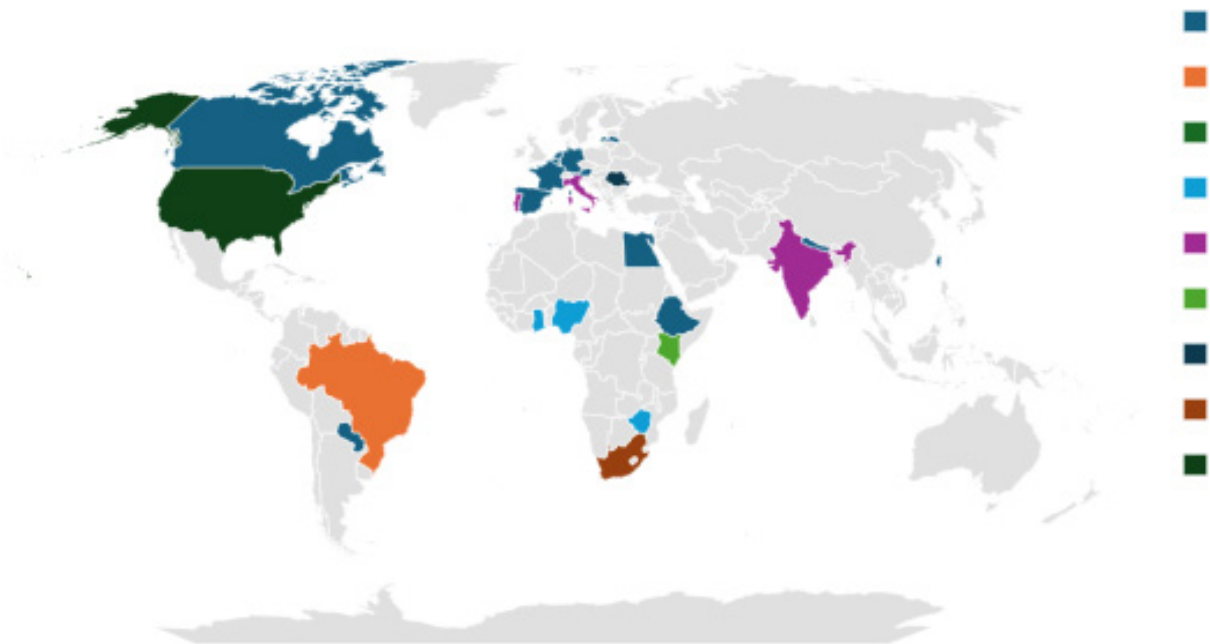
The third section explored young people's perceptions on SIGA's Universal Standards which address four vital components: good governance, financial integrity, sports betting integrity and youth development and child protection. Survey participants were asked to select all the standards that they believe are important and using an open-ended question, they were asked for their ideas on how they can better support those standards. They were also asked to select all the challenges related to sport integrity and whether they have witnessed or experience issues related to sport integrity.

Following the publication of this paper, we anticipate entry into Sport Integrity Journal and presenting this project to the SIGA Executive Committee and any related entities at their discretion. As a means of accountability, we will send the findings of our project to all survey respondents and all delegates of the SIGA Youth Council. With purpose and collaboration, we completed a project culminating in the collective skills and expertise of the SIGA Youth Council.

6. Analysis & results

Our global research survey recorded 100 responses from participants across various nations, cultures, and paths to sport. All responses were in English. Respondents were representatives from 27 different countries around the world: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, England, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Mauritius, Nepal, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Paraguay, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, USA and Zimbabwe.

Figure 1. A geographic visualization of the participants' countries of birth



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37% of respondents reported that they live in a different country to the country they were born in. Those who reported living in a different country stated that they are based in: Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, England, Germany, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and the USA. Although the research sample is relatively small, having participants from different countries increases the generalizability of the findings as it includes a broader range of perspectives (Skene, 2007).

As seen in figure 2, most respondents (56%) were between the ages of 26 to 30, 36% were between 22 to 25 years old and 8% were between 18 to 21 years old. In terms of gender, 58% identified as men, 41% as women and 1% stated that their gender was not listed in the question.

Figure 2. Age groups

AGE GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS

18-21 years old 22-25 years old 26-30 years old

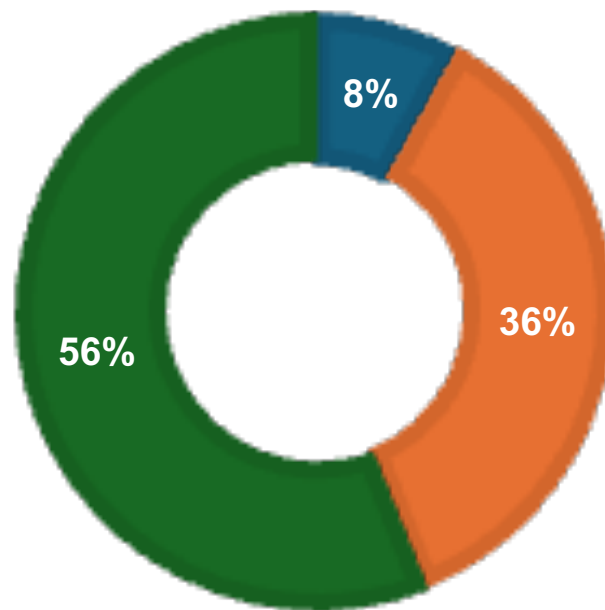
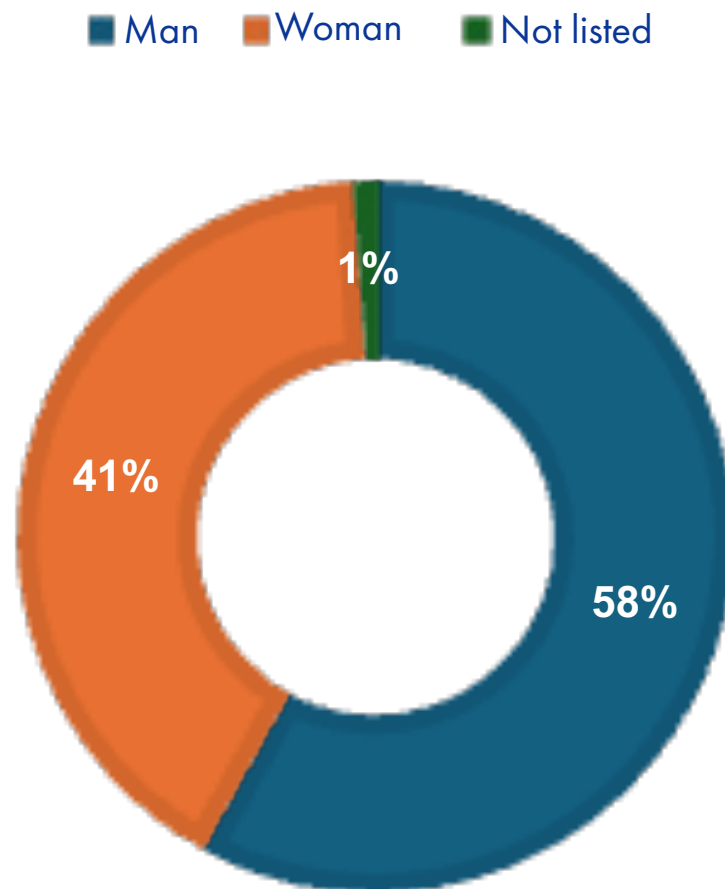


Figure 3. Participants' self-identified gender

PARTICIPANTS' SELF-IDENTIFIED GENDER



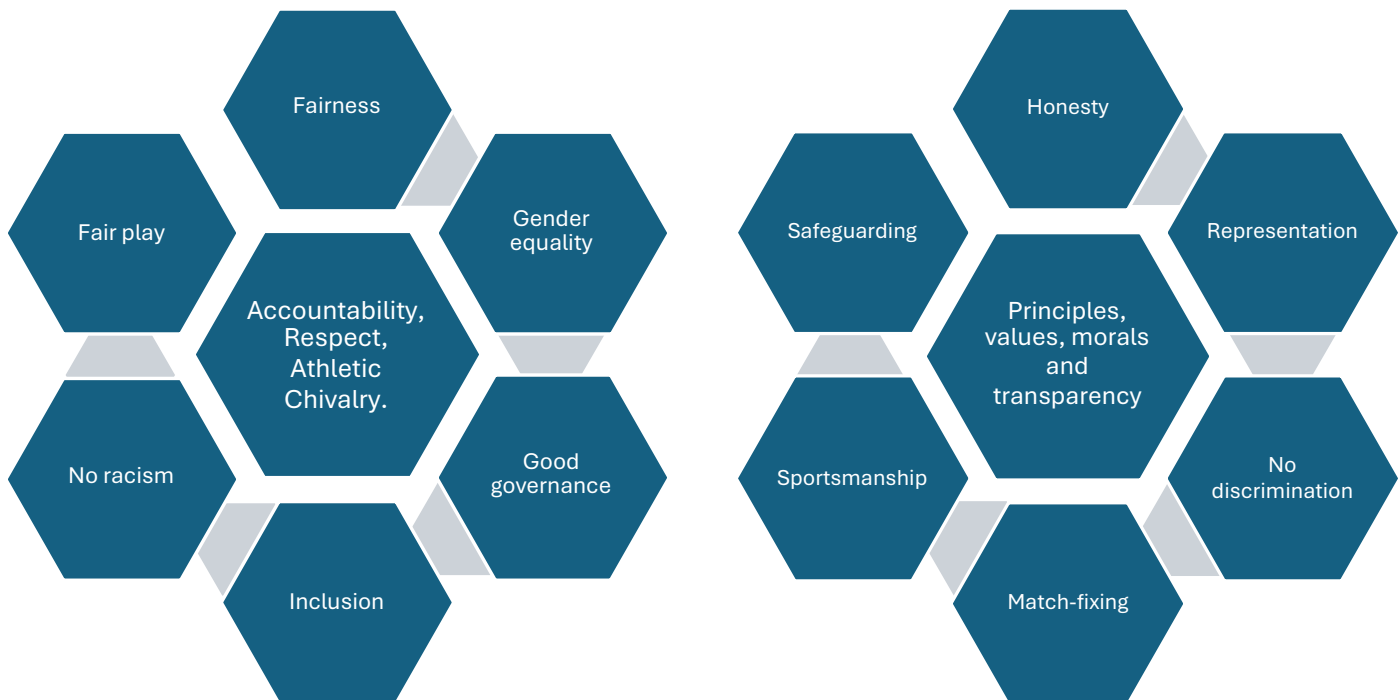
In terms of disabilities, 92% reported no disabilities while 3% reported an intellectual/ developmental disability, 3% preferred not to say whether they have a disability, 1% reported a psychological or emotional disability and 1% reported a hearing disability.

Participants were asked what their relationship with the sports industry was and were asked to select all that applied. They were involved in the sports industry as:

- Spectator/ fans (n=33)
- Sport industry professionals (n=22)
- Current athletes (n=17)

- Former athletes (n=15)
- Coaches (n=9)
- Academics studying sports (as a student or instructor) (n=9)
- Other (n=7)
- Sports executives (n=6)
- Sports media members (n=2)

Participants were also asked regarding the first idea related to sport integrity that comes to their minds:



Figures 4 & 5. First idea related to sport integrity

The term sport integrity is subjective. SIGA summarizes sport integrity as safeguarding values toward a vision of sport free of unethical, illicit, and criminal activity, and ensuring the positive impact of sport benefits to all citizens.

Respondents wrote their definition of sport integrity, and they were divided into themes and presented in the table below:

Table 1. Definitions of sport integrity

THEME	DEFINITION
FAIRNESS & EQUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'A fair game for everyone with equal opportunities.' • 'Being committed, fair and sticking to the same rules set for everybody (not cheating)' • 'Playing fair, accepting the rules and accepting others.' • 'That the rules has to apply to all the same' • 'The commitment to fairness, transparency and ethical conduct across all levels of sport, ensuring that competitions are free from manipulation, governance is accountable and participation uplifts communities. It means protecting sport from corruption, abuse and discrimination so that its power to inspire, unite and positively transform lives is never compromised.' • 'To treat everyone equally' • 'It is a stand for all the values that sport possess. Sport possess, competitiveness with an accountability towards oneself and others of being the best they can be with respect to the sport and its community. Sport integrity is the spirit of protecting sport with any means from what could hurt its practitioners and stakeholders. Be it safeguarding of athletes to human rights of the athlete of any category. From fair play to financial fair play, sport integrity means guarding all the good values of sport and fairness.' • 'Sport integrity refers to a state of fairness and equality in all sports competitions, where a each has the opportunity to succeed.'
HONESTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Being honest with strong moral principles' • 'The ability to be honest, play honest.' • 'To me it is the moral compass one should have in sports participation, the ability to be fair and honest.' • 'Keeping sports fair, non-bias and honest.'
ETHICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Being morally and ethically sound in matters regarding sports. Upholding the values of that sport.' • 'To practice sport in an ethical manner.' • 'Clean sports, disciplined sportsmen and integrable leaders' • 'Sport integrity means ensuring fairness, transparency, and ethics in all aspects of sport, protecting it from corruption, bias, and exploitation.' • 'My definition of sports integrity is the discipline that comes with understanding the role that sports plays in our lives and guarding the sport from unfairness, disrespect, and unethical use of sports in the society we are in.'

<p>NO DISCRIMINATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Being non-discriminatory against anyone who wants to play or get involved'</i> • <i>'Not discriminating against others.'</i> • <i>'Sport that is free from doping, unjust enrichment, all forms of discrimination and upholds equality'</i> • <i>'Ensuring that selection criteria is transparent, ensuring that the matches are not fixed and that no favoritism or discrimination based on race, gender, capabilities, etc'</i>
<p>RESPECTING RULES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Following the rules while playing and also away from the game as well'</i> • <i>'Sport integrity means making sure everything is done the right way in the sport as well as the business surrounding the sport. All rules, regulations, safety everything is followed to the letter of the law'</i> • <i>'My definition of sports integrity would simply mean playing fair, following the rules and being honest with sports.'</i> • <i>'Knowing the rules of your sport and staying within the guidelines of the sport around integrity'</i> • <i>'Complying to the laws and rules of a certain sport'</i>

More than half of respondents (58%) feel like they understand issues regarding sport integrity well. The general understanding is that young adults have a role in influencing change in sport integrity as 97% of respondents believe that youth have a pivotal role in the future of sport integrity. These pledges to influence change must be paired with practical suggestions, asking organizations to equip their younger members with tools to affect change, such as giving them a voice, a stage, or a role to speak up their perspectives, incentivize meaningful and age-inclusive meetings so that mentorships and knowledge transference between the different generations is made possible.

Survey respondents presented some ideas about how young adults can influence change in sport integrity and some shared specific examples of how young adults might influence change. They are presented in the table below.

Table 2. Ideas about young people influencing change in sport integrity.

IDEAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Young adults need to take up space and proactively engage with the topic of Sport Integrity and make full use of existing platforms to share more with their peers.</i> • <i>Young adults could influence change by consistently demonstrating positive ethical behaviour and they could also be role models to those younger than them, setting up future generations to also maintain fairness in sports. Young people also have bigger platforms in this generation and they could also be used to raise awareness on the fair regulations needed to be followed in sports.</i> • <i>Young adults can influence sport integrity by promoting transparency, reporting misconduct, and leading awareness campaigns. For example, student-athletes can advocate anti-doping education within university sports programs.</i> • <i>Young adults can influence change in sport integrity by exemplary leadership. Always conducting themselves in a just and ethical manner. Building and harnessing a culture of respect, morality and values in their respective roles.</i> • <i>Young adults can influence change in sport integrity because they can influence fairness, respect and honesty in sports. One example, would be how young adults can use social media for awareness. They can use social media to spread awareness about sports integrity issues and encourage transparency in sports organisations.</i> • <i>Young adults are the generations where they can talk to children and older adults. Doesn't matter if they are a parent or not, they will know babies, children, evolving with or around sport, at school, with friends.. they should be aware of what people are trying to do in sports to prevent the younger, and help/ get involved/ promote a better way to practice sport, within leagues, federations, or even small town clubs.</i> • <i>They are the only one who can change it according to me. Young adults experience the modern developments of the sport world and are connected on-ground to the changing dynamics of sport. For instance, a young athlete turned professional like me, who has experienced the integrity issues in his environment, has the opportunity to step-up, learn and take actions against it. Even if it means writing blog post or articles about it, raising voice, taking webinars/workshops to aware people and educate other upcoming young athletes regarding how to save themselves from the issues I experienced.</i> • <i>Adults can educate children on good values that can guide them and help them treat others well. They can lead by example by practising kindness, respect, and integrity in their interactions.</i> • <i>As a young adult we have massive influence through digital media. Exerting pression and vocalizing for change in those platforms will influence the organizations.</i> • <i>Current/future generations can change mindset and values toward forms of cheating in sport. They could protest, set up groups, campaign. Role model clean and positive sport</i> • <i>Holding those in power accountable when they do not maintain and abide by the values and ethics of the sport. Example, a club executive hosts a fundraiser to buy new kit for a sports team and then not buying the kit. Young adults can call a club meeting to hold the executive accountable and demanding the return of funds for the kit.</i> • <i>They are exposed to it, they understand what is going on around them, they can help shape the future of the sport to ensure integrity is at the heart of the sport.</i> • <i>They may see or experience things we don't see, in terms of how they are treated, if they are discriminated against, checks on their mental health, we can survey them or ask them one by one during the season if they have any better ideas. The Youth always lead changes</i>

SIGA's Universal Standards were also addressed, with Youth Development and Child Protection being the most selected (N=62), closely followed by Good Governance in Sport (n=52) suggesting that the youth have a consensus on the need for more protection of the younger generations while applying better governance policies. This also

may demonstrate that young professionals ages 18-30, perhaps due to proximity to youth and their early careers in sport, are most closely aligned in protecting our most vulnerable age demographic by implementing proper procedures and policies. Financial Integrity (n=41) and Sports Betting Integrity (n=23) were also at the top of the agenda, which translates into the need for higher financial supervision of sport stakeholders and more awareness of the increasing and worrisome numbers of unsupervised youth and teens using betting platforms.

The survey also included SIGA’s Committees with a high level of meaningfulness and importance. Respondents were asked to select what they believe to be the most important committee topic(s) and the figure below shows the order, from the most important to the least important topics:

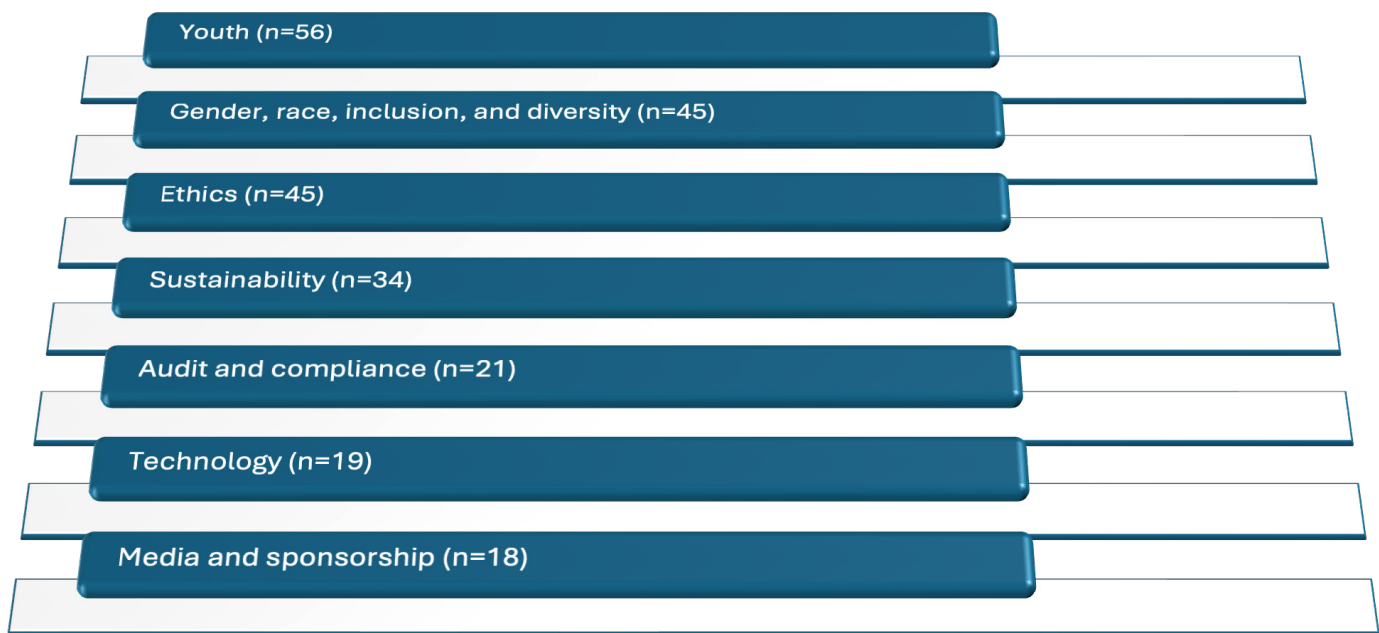


Figure 6. Ranking of the most important committee topics

Additionally, respondents were asked whether they have any ideas on how to better support the areas they selected and whether there are any concrete projects they are aware of. Results were grouped by themes and presented in the table below:

Table 3. Ideas and projects to support committee topics

THEMES	IDEAS
<p>YOUTH INVOLVEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘I do have ideas, such as having development organisations that focus on youth development. Having sport for social development to face the challenges in the selected areas.’ • ‘Include more youth and women in decision making’ • ‘Youth sports, where in my eyes most of the societal value of sports comes from, cannot operate without giving a lot of agency and goodwill to parents, coaches, volunteers, school districts, etc. Tireless unpaid work keeps the entire operation running, and that makes the system opaque and hard to police. To me, this is why youth empowerment is so important. The young adults playing these sports are the bridge between what’s happening on the field, and during practice, and the community of parents and administrators that enables them to play. Helping young adults speak up allows this existing community structure to self-enforce sports integrity issues.’ • ‘Have more youth committees. Develop youth training camps Recruit more youth’ • ‘Supporting youth development creates opportunities and prevents exploitation. Gender and race equality promote fair treatment, pay, and representation in all sports’
<p>COLLABORATIVE APPROACH & RAISING AWARENESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘A lot of NGOs are working on these important subjects, making links/ networks with them are important. Sharing results, teamworks. Population can be the same, so the work should be !’ • ‘Setting up more groups to allow for every kind of person to participate in’ • ‘Public awareness campaigns about sport integrity in rural and township communities is an absolute necessity. Development and enhance of accountability measures Promotion of anti-racism, anti-match fixing and standardized application of financial fair play’ • ‘corporate brands should be used as a vessel to promote sports integrity through such partnerships as sponsorship’ • ‘Campaigns to support those causes using celebrity endorsements.’
<p>MANAGEMENT & POLICIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Implement mentorship programs, gender equity policies, and regular audits, etc.’ • ‘Interim management that focus on building the sports brand’ • ‘The audit and compliance of how funds are distributed has been a hindrance in growing various sporting disciplines within the country of South Africa. A wealth of talent goes unrecognised due to sporting bodies such as SAFA lacking a functional system to support the discovery and growth of talent in more remote areas.’ • ‘Proper and ethical drug testing. More diverse individuals in positions of power in leading governing bodies.’ • ‘Having a committee that oversees the implementation of the goals of the sport. This committee must not have members who are after financial gain. It must be like a NGO with members comprised of people who support and help the sport grow.’ • ‘Ethics uphold honesty and fairness by preventing corruption and doping, while audit and compliance ensure transparency in sports governance’

<p>MAKING SPORT SAFE & INCLUSIVE FOR EVERYONE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Make sport fun again. The problem nowadays is that most children and young adults see sport as something they have to do, for example in school. There is a need for more new, cool, sport events which don’t necessarily have competition against each other in mind. If you have those competitions open to the general public, so that everyone can participate, from different ethical and social backgrounds, you could foster community where there was none before.’ • ‘Protect young athletes, teach fair play, and create safe spaces.’ • ‘The inclusion of diversity and ethics is important to me both in sports and everyday life. I feel like creating an environment of respect and accountability, whilst also promoting diverse leadership can help people from all different backgrounds feel comfortable within the sport they are playing. Everybody will be respected the same despite their backgrounds and will all be held to the same standards. Ethics are also important to me as it keeps sports fair amongst all individuals.’ • ‘Social Inclusion through Football, Walking Football’ • ‘Setting up more groups to allow for every kind of person to participate in’ • ‘Inclusivity and diversity ensure that athletes of all backgrounds, including those with disabilities, have equal opportunities’
<p>EXISTING PROJECTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Youth Leadership Projects (IOC, FIBA Foundation) are a great way of educating and empowering youth’ • ‘There is a research project within SIGA which has the development of a Integrity Scorecard for sport organisations.’ • ‘There is a Brazilian project for young basketball players organized by ex pros. In all those areas there could be foment to university and industry partnerships!’ • ‘Black Lives Matter, taking the knee’ • ‘A mentorship programme called peace harmony’ • ‘FIFA’s Women’s Football Strategy promotes equality, access, and development for women globally’

The economic impact and growth trajectory of the sports industry comes with threats and challenges. In terms of the biggest threats to sports integrity and consequently, to the future of the sport, respondents illuminated a landscape where a lack of governance and compliance (n=41) was seen as the biggest threat followed by financial malpractice (n=38), behaviour misconduct (n=35), violence, harassment and/or abuse (n=33), lack of sports related educational opportunities (n=31) and match fixing and manipulation (n=30).

In an increasingly multicultural and interconnected world, particularly amongst the key 18-30 age demographic, expanding efforts to ensure sport integrity is and remains an equitable endeavour. Even so, it is important to emphasize that all the challenges presented in the survey (beyond the supra mentioned, lack of equity, diversity and/or inclusion (n=25), lack of mentorship (n=20), lack of media transparency (n=16), inadequate safeguarding (n=15), sportswashing (n=14), digital piracy (n=9), and advances in technology/equipment (n=5)) present a threat to Sport Integrity and the sustainability and free access to Sport. When asked to explain why they selected those specific threats, respondents wrote:

Table 4. Challenges/ threats to Sport Integrity

CHALLENGE/THREAT	QUOTE
LACK OF GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Lack of Governance & Compliance: Poor leadership and corruption in sports organisations can lead to unfair decisions, mismanagement of funds, and lack of accountability. Without strong governance, sports can become unethical and biased.'</i> • <i>'Governance is key, behaviours must be decent, and respect for financial legislations must be upheld so to avoid unevenness in rights or opportunities. Transparency makes people accountable for their actions.'</i> • <i>'Governance is needed to make sure things run smoothly as the market fails.'</i> • <i>'Lack of governance and compliance there are not many organisations that support youth sports and teaching them how to be ethical. Not all the funds that are put into sports organisations actually get to work in a positive way because of financial mismanagement.'</i>
BEHAVIOUR MISCONDUCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Behavior Misconduct: When athletes, coaches, or officials act unprofessionally such as cheating, using drugs, or disrespecting others it damages the reputation of the sport and creates an unfair playing field.'</i>
FINANCIAL MALPRACTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Misconduct of certain leaders on financial squander'</i> • <i>'I chose financial malpractice because it can lead to corruption and undermine the trust in sports.'</i> • <i>'The lack of governance and compliance + Financial Malpractice these issues have impacted our economy the most. With investments being made, the unethical application of compliance regulations along with improper distribution of funds have halted one of the largest contributors of SA's GDP with missed opportunities for fighting socioeconomic issues (unemployment etc) that have left the country in a detrimental state.'</i>
MATCH FIXING AND MANIPULATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Match fixing and manipulation remains one of the biggest challenges in sport. It involves dishonesty by trusted individuals'</i> • <i>'Match fixing and manipulation threaten the fairness of competitions, making it impossible for athletes and fans to trust the results. Inadequate safeguarding puts vulnerable athletes at risk and can lead to abuse, which is unacceptable in any sport.'</i>
DIGITAL PIRACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Digital piracy losses broadcast a lot of money. Which then means there's less money within the sport from TV sponsors.'</i> • <i>'Digital piracy is a direct outgrowth of digitization, but it comes from the same root.'</i>

<p>LACK OF MEDIA TRANSPARENCY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Lack of Media Transparency: When the media hides or manipulates information, it affects how fans and sponsors view sports. Biased reporting, covering up scandals, or spreading false news can harm athletes and sports organisations.’</i> • <i>‘The lack of media transparency is a major issue to be addressed because majority of the sports audience heavily depends on the traditional media houses to interact and get news about the sport industry. The lack of transparency in the space places a severe threat to all other spheres.’</i>
<p>LACK OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND OR INCLUSION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Lack of Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity: If certain groups (like women, people of different races, or disabled athletes) don’t get the same opportunities, funding, or recognition, it creates an unfair system where only a few benefit.’</i> • <i>‘Lack of diversity and inclusion in sports organizations is against the principal of fairness.’</i>
<p>INADEQUATE SAFEGUARDING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Inadequate Safeguarding: Without proper protection policies, young athletes and vulnerable players can be exploited or taken advantage of, leading to mental and physical harm.’</i>
<p>VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT, AND OR ABUSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Violence, Harassment & Abuse: Physical, verbal, or emotional mistreatment of players, referees, or fans ruins the spirit of sports. This includes racism, bullying, sexual harassment, and aggressive behavior that makes sports unsafe.’</i>
<p>SPORTSWASHING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Sports washing is biggest threat you have nation states dictating and letting them do what they want’</i> • <i>‘Sportwashing encourages human rights abuse thus painting sport as a tool that propagates bad virtues, racism in sports is rampant and paints sport as an activity that lacks integrity and finally so many countries lack governance in sport making it hard to have compliance and integrity.’</i>
<p>ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY/ EQUIPMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Advances in technology/equipment will always be a problem. Especially in a time where there are more advances then ever. Facing this problem will be a big hurdle in the future, because if this is not kept in check, more money will equal a better performance through expensive high end equipment.’</i>
<p>LACK OF MENTORSHIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘In my eyes lack of mentorship and lack of educational opportunities describe the same problem. There is a general lack of guidance related to sports, which is a big problem in a time that is changing in such a rapid way.’</i>

**LACK OF
SPORTS RELATED
EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES**

- *‘Lack of Sports Educational Opportunities: If young people don’t have access to proper sports education and training, they miss out on developing their skills and knowledge, which limits their chances of success in sports careers.’*
- *‘For example, lack of sports related educational opportunities - this is visible for children which are for example talented in a specific sport, but their parents might not have the financial means to support/encourage them so they end up giving up on their dreams of becoming athletes etc’*
- *‘For me, one of the greatest problem the sport industry face, it’s the lack of sports related educational. I remark that a lot of actors are doing more and more about this aspect and I very happy with.’*
- *‘A lack of educational opportunities leads to ignorance of integrity issues in sports’*
- *‘One of the choices I added is the lack of educational resources. There are millions of athletes, ASPs, coaches and stakeholders in the world who are not even aware, or don’t have the accessibility to educate themselves regarding any prevalent issues. Many times, the agencies fail to reach the vulnerable.’*

Nearly half of respondents (48%) reported that they have witnessed or experienced issues related to sport integrity (e.g. unethical behaviour, match-fixing, discrimination, harassment, or corruption). The examples given were related to discrimination, racism, harassment and financial misconduct:

‘A president of a sport federation was involved in financial malpractice’

‘Back in India I was used as a medium by my seniors for drug trafficking. I wasn’t aware of these medicines they used to ask me to get for them from the medical stores, I later realised that they were apparently steroids. I have been a victim of bullying, harassment, age fraud and bullying by my fellow teammates and coach.’

‘Discrimination based on ethnicity.’

‘A lot of racism and physical & verbal abuse in football.’

‘Slurs against players in 2025’

‘Owners of teams who also happen to be part of the executive overseeing the sport in the region rigging games in favour of their teams.’

‘The Governing Body in a specific region has budgeted for numerous projects and clinics to be hosted in helping unearth talent in remote areas with the most of what was set to be carried out not done and funding misused’

‘In football (not professional) it happens weekly. Everybody has their own agendas and will always try their best to make sure their own interests are the main priority regardless of if it interferes with the integrity of the sport.’

‘My involvement in team sports has highlighted instances of unfair treatment, including racial discrimination. These experiences have resulted in missed job opportunities that are essential for gaining experience as a sports administrator or coach. It is imperative to address these issues and actively work towards breaking this cycle.’

7. Opportunities for future exploration

As scholarship and best practices progress and as future iterations of the SIGA Youth Council move forward with their reform agenda, we anticipate this project can be refined to better understand and include emerging professionals in crafting robust and effective sport integrity policies. We also recognize that time constraints, conflicting group schedules, and the inherent and cumbersome nature of human error offer opportunities for improvement and future exploration.

Given SIGA's firm stance on gender parity in leadership roles in sport, exploring the implications of gender in sport integrity from an empirical standpoint beyond the Global Female Mentorship Programme and Youth Council may serve as a north star to determine precisely where efforts in gender equity are excelling and where more concerted efforts are needed. Although we decided not to inquire about race in this project due to its nature as a social construct not rooted in scientific veracity, in no way do we seek to dismiss the real-world effects of racial discrimination or discourage others interested in this research from potentially using race as a variable. Further studies examining how these blurred lines and shifting identities impact an individual's relationship to sport and sport integrity may offer key insights not explored through our project.

8. Limitations

This current study is limited by the relatively small sample of participants and by the fact that the survey was only created in English. Although participants were encouraged to write answers in whatever language they felt comfortable writing in, all responses recorded were in English. The generalisability of these results is also subject to certain limitations. Most participants were based in European or African countries meaning that the results might not be entirely representative for the population of young athletes in other continents. Despite its exploratory nature and its limitations, this study offers some significant insight into young athletes' views and experiences related to sport integrity.

9. Limitations

In conclusion, people view sport integrity differently and define it in different ways based on what aligns with their values the most. When respondents were asked what they first think about when they hear 'sport integrity', they wrote key words like fairness, inclusion, no racism, good governance, honesty, no discrimination and transparency. They defined 'sport integrity' based on different areas such as 'fairness & equity', 'honesty', 'ethical', 'no discrimination' and 'respecting rules'. This reinforces the importance of promoting and respecting integrity values in every aspect of the sport.

This report has also highlighted the ways in which young people play a significant role in influencing change in sport integrity. More than half of participants in study have a good understanding of sport integrity and nearly

all respondents believe young people play a role in the change. They shared a number of ideas about how young people can influence change including raising awareness and being role models to create a positive culture of integrity and accountability. Therefore, we propose that SIGA and other international institutions consider appointing at least one representative from this demographic to key committees dedicated to sport integrity. In the case of SIGA, better utilizing the skills and expertise of the Youth Council by appointing members to Permanent Committees is a welcomed beginning to equipping young professionals with the tools to affect change. Better utilizing social media to meet emerging professionals where they are to publicly declare SIGA's Universal Standards and share initiatives that speak directly to them. This key demographic is at a time when educational opportunities serve as currency for job advancement. SIGA has the potential not only as a global repository for sport integrity policy but also as an educational vessel for emerging professionals to acquire credential tutelage in their respective journeys in sport. This pedagogical resource can also serve to host mechanisms for compliance for officials and executives in sport, especially those interacting with historically marginalized and vulnerable groups in sport.

The most important Sport Integrity Universal Standards components as selected by participants were youth development & child protection and good governance in sport and the most important committee topics were youth, gender, race, inclusion, & diversity and ethics. There was a general belief that for change to happen and for integrity values to be at the heart of the sport, there is need for good governance to start with; those in charge have the power to create a positive culture. In addition, young people need to be protected and have fair opportunities to develop. As Yaffe et al. (2021) highlighted, morality and values are crucial for the development of young athletes.

Sport's significant economic impact and growth trajectory present many challenges. Respondents stated that the main challenges posing the greatest threats to sport integrity are lack of governance & compliance, financial malpractice, behaviour misconduct, violence, harassment & abuse and lack of sport related educational opportunities. They spoke about how those challenges affect the integrity of the sport on a larger scale. For example, poor governance can hinder the development of the sport, driving away potential sponsors and future investors. Poor governance can also lead to discrimination, harassment and corruption and as stated before, young people face a lot of challenges, especially discrimination based on race and gender (Houston, 2017). Nearly half of respondents stated that indeed, they witnessed or experienced issue related to sport integrity such as being discriminated because of ethnicity or receiving verbal abuse while playing the sport. There is need for a collaborative approach to fight against those challenges and ensure young athletes have the opportunities to grow and develop in an ethical environment.

Lastly, although sport integrity is a somewhat malleable subject destined for change, for Universal Standards to be recognized globally, they must be enforced globally. Like most industries, sport is not exempt from its cohort of gatekeepers resistant to change. With the differences in age inevitably are differences in approaches regarding the pace of change. The grudge match between evolution and revolution as a matter of reformation has been a constant struggle within organizations which admittedly will not be resolved through our research. This reality does not dilute the urgency for critical reflection to meet this inflection point throughout global sport. Despite the growing pains of necessary change, we invite all invested in a better sports world for all, to leave our literal and proverbial comfort zones, be willing to push the envelope and widen the table and commit to reaffirming our collective efforts to sport integrity.

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