

FAIR PLAY – In Sport and Life

Summarized by Susan Ellis – The bulk of this article is taken verbatim from the following:
The Essence of Fair Play

(<http://www.fairplayinternational.org/what-is-fair-play->)

Alabama 4H – Leading with Character: Sports Ethics

(<https://www.aces.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/4HYD-2070L.pdf>)

Arizona Sports Summit Accord

(<http://sports.josephsoninstitute.org/resources-sport/accord/>)

What is fair play in sport?

Sport has been associated with ethics and education right from its birth in ancient Greece. The ancient Greeks believed that the development of the mind, spirit, and body were linked, and that a well-educated person was instructed in all areas. An athletic victory was considered a credit to both the athlete's physical and moral virtues. Physical training was valued for its role in the development of such qualities as endurance and patience. The motivation was the development of disciplined, devout, virtuous citizens. This Olympic ideal, although somewhat faded and tarnished at times, is still the foundation of virtues such as respect, friendship, team spirit, fair competition, sport without doping, respect for written and unwritten rules such as equality, integrity, solidarity, tolerance, care, excellence and joy, are the building blocks of fair play not only on the field of play, but in everyday life.

Respect

For every athlete, playing by the written rules is mandatory. Respecting the unwritten ones is a must. Fair play requires unconditional respect for opponents, fellow players, referees and fans.



Friendship

Rivalry on the field does not exclude friendship. On the contrary. Friendship can and does grow from noble rivalries and out of mutual respect.

Team spirit

Individuals can be strong on their own but they are much stronger in a team. Victory achieved alone can be sweet but there is nothing sweeter than sharing that moment with your teammates and friends.

Fair competition

To enjoy the fruits of success it is not enough to win. Triumph must be scored by absolutely fair means and by honest and just play.

Sport without doping

Someone who takes drugs cheats. Someone who cheats ruins the game. Someone who ruins the game cannot be played with.

Equality

Competing on equal terms is essential in sport. Otherwise performance cannot be measured properly.

Integrity

Being honest and having strong moral principles are essential to fair play. Practicing sport within a sound ethical framework is vitally important if you aim to be a true champion.

Solidarity

It is important to support each other and share feelings, aims and dreams. Mutual support brings mutual success on and off the field.

Tolerance

The willingness to accept behaviour or decisions you may not agree with develops your self-control. Ultimately that could be the deciding factor when it comes to winning or losing.

Care

True champions care about each other as they are well aware they could not be where they are without being cared for by others.

Excellence

Sport engages us in a collective effort to pursue human excellence.

Joy

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympic Games said: *'The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight; the essential thing is not to have won, but to have fought well.'* Competition can be severe but you should always first look for joy when practicing any sports. You should never forget about the play even in the heat of the fight.

Without fairness and trustworthiness the established order of our society is at risk. If we do not play by the rules, we ruin the spirit of the game and it is impossible to play with destroyers of the game.

Fair play, which is an essential and central part of successful involvement, promotion and development in both sport and life, can teach people tolerance and respect for others. It allows them to integrate into society and create a sense of teamwork. Fair play in sport is capable of giving hope, pride and identity, and it is able to unite where nationalities, politics, religions and cultures often divide.

Cooperation in the spirit of fair play delivers even greater results than pure gamesmanship in all walks of life. It plays a key role, the role of a catalyst in today's society as a means of improving quality of life and human well-being.

Fair play for champions of sport

There is no sport without fair play and there are no champions either.

'It takes more than crossing the line first to make a champion. A champion is more than a winner. A champion is someone who respects the rules, rejects doping and competes in the spirit of fair play.' ~ Jacques Rogge, IOC President

'Fair play gives sport the character of beauty. Fair play is a common language, the cement of sports that is capable of gathering together the whole sports world. There are many champions, but the champion of champions is the one who trains, competes and lives in the spirit of fair play.' ~ Jenő Kamuti, President of the International Committee for Fair Play

'Fair play incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving.' ~ Code of Sport Ethics, Council of Europe

'The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight; the essential thing is not to have won, but to have fought well.' ~ Baron Pierre de Coubertin

Fair play for champions of everyday life

'Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.' ~ Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics

'The notion of fair play is a universally understood concept, which underpins all of sport. Without fairness, sport is devoid of any meaning or purpose. Worse still, it can be a detrimental experience for its participants.

But fair play is also a philosophy - one of respect for others, and respect for the institution of sport. It leads to an agreement, between all of those involved in sport, on the values and lessons that we want sport to teach our children and ourselves. Playing fair also has to do with making choices. As we interact with each other in sport, or as spectators of sport, we must regularly consider and define what we think is right and what is not. Sport engages us in a collective effort to pursue human excellence. As our children interact with each other in sport, their ability to make good choices about fair play issues matures along with their ability to think and learn about what makes for a rewarding and fulfilling life in society.' ~ Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport

'Fair play is a positive concept. Sport is a social and cultural activity which, practiced fairly, enriches society and the friendship between nations. Sport is also recognized as

an individual activity which, played fairly, offers the opportunity for self-knowledge, self-expression and fulfillment; personal achievement, skill acquisition and demonstration of ability; social interaction, enjoyment, good health and well-being. Sport promotes involvement and responsibility in society with its wide range of clubs and leaders working voluntarily. In addition, responsible involvement in some activities can help to promote sensitivity to the environment.' ~ Code of Sports Ethics, Council of Europe

The following stories exemplified the spirit of fair play:

** In 1995 World and Olympic Champion pole-vaulter Sergey Bubka helped his South-African rival, Okkert Brits, on two occasions by lending him his equipment. Firstly, on 3 July after learning that Brits equipment had not arrived at the Paris Grand Prix Bubka offered him his poles so that he could compete. Again, on 9 September at the IAAF Grand Prix Final in Munich Bubka repeated his generous act. This time, however, it cost him victory as Brits vaulted a winning 5.95 m while Bubka's final jump was just under at 5.90 m.

** 1964 winter Olympics, Innsbruck, Austria: The British two-man bobsled team, led by Tony Nash, completed its first run placing second overall. Then Nash discovered a broken bolt on the sled putting them out of the competition. At the bottom of the hill, the great Italian bobsled driver Eugenio Monti (who was lying in first place), heard of their plight and without hesitation, removed the bolt from his own sled sending it to the British team at the top of the hill. Nash's team fixed their sled and clinched gold. Monti took the bronze and later commented, "Tony Nash did not win because I gave him a bolt. Tony Nash won because he was the best driver."



** With two runners on base and a strike against her, Sara Tucholsky of Western Oregon University uncorked her best swing and did something she had never done, in high school or college. Her first home run cleared the centerfield fence. But it appeared to be the shortest of dreams come true when she missed first base, started back to tag it and collapsed with a knee injury. She crawled back to first but could do no more. The first-base coach said she would be called out if her teammates tried to help her. Or, the umpire said, a pinch runner could be called in, and the homer would count as a single. Then, members of the Central Washington University softball team stunned spectators by carrying Tucholsky around the bases Saturday so the three-run homer would count — an act that contributed to their own elimination from the playoffs. Central Washington first baseman Mallory Holtman, the career home run leader in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference, asked the umpire if she and her teammates could help Tucholsky. The umpire said there was no rule against it. So Holtman and shortstop Liz Wallace put their arms under Tucholsky's legs, and she put her arms over their shoulders. The three headed around the basepaths, stopping to let Tucholsky touch each base with her uninjured leg. As the trio reached home plate, Tucholsky said, the entire Western Oregon team was in tears. "In the end, it is not about winning and losing

so much," Holtman said. "It was about this girl. She hit it over the fence and was in pain, and she deserved a home run." Her homer sent Western Oregon to a 4-2 victory, ending Central Washington's chances of winning the conference and advancing to the playoffs.

Values for life

Fair play is not a theory. Fair play is an attitude that manifests itself in behaviour. Whenever we act in the spirit of fair play we contribute to building a peaceful and better world. The following values which are the building blocks of fair play can easily be expressed in the interactions of everyday life.

- Respect
- Friendship
- Team spirit
- Fair competition
- Respect for written and unwritten rules
- Equality
- Integrity
- Solidarity
- Tolerance
- Care
- Joy

For many people, these values reflect the reason many of us participate in sport. It is up to each and every person to uphold these values to the highest degree, right from the participant, to the coach, to the organization, and the fans.

Although there are many examples of good sportsmanship, unethical sports-related behavior does occur. These disruptive actions occur on and off the field: cheating, misconduct by players and spectators, and commercialization. (Leading with Character: Sports Ethics – Alabama 4H)

To address these issues, the United States Olympic Committee Coaching Division and CHARACTER COUNTS! Sports co-sponsored a summit of many of the nation's most informed and influential leaders in nonprofessional sports. The meeting resulted in the issuance of sixteen principles, called the Arizona Sports Summit Accord, along with strategies designed to lift the ethics and the character-building potential of athletic competition. The principles of the Arizona Sports Summit Accord are based on the Olympic philosophy that there is no true victory unless it is achieved with honor and the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

What can we do in our sport to ensure the values of Fair Play are upheld?

- Every club should hold a Fair Play seminar/ discussion at least once per year with parents, coaches and athletes.

- Invite a club rep to speak on the club's code of conduct.
- Invite a referee to speak on rules of the sport, including expectations of behavior of athletes both on and off the field of play and how the following racing rules apply and what athletes can and should do to uphold and abide by the racing rules:
 - OFF-TRACK: Shortening the distance to be skated with one or both skates on the left side of the curve, marked by track marking blocks.
 - IMPEDING: Deliberately impeding, blocking, charging, or pushing another Competitor with any part of the body. Interfere with another Skater by crossing his/her course thereby deliberately causing contact. (Note: 'contact' is the key word here. If there is no contact there is not likely to be a penalty.)
 - ASSISTANCE: Each Skater shall compete as an individual. Any assistance from other Skaters will be cause for sanctions of all Skaters involved. This will not apply to the push the Skater receives from their Team-mate in a Relay race. (Note: This rule replaces and clarifies the old 'Team Skating' rule, meaning that assisting a skater from any team in a race is against the rules and is subject to penalty. Many skaters are of the mistaken belief that because 'Team Skating' is no longer listed that it is legal.)
 - KICKING OUT: Deliberately kicking out of any skate during any part of a race thereby causing danger including at the finish line or throwing the body across the finish line is forbidden.
- Post Fair Play posters at strategic places around the rink and in the locker room.
- Reward athletes during the year and at the end of the year with Fair Play citations.
- Coaches and parents: Discuss Fair Play and expectations for behavior with athletes.

Have Fun, Play Safe, and Play Fair!



References:

The Essence of Fair Play

(<http://www.fairplayinternational.org/what-is-fair-play->)

Alabama 4H – Leading with Character: Sports Ethics

(<https://www.aces.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/4HYD-2070L.pdf>)

Arizona Sports Summit Accord

(<http://sports.josephsoninstitute.org/resources-sport/accord/>)