

Fair Play

Integrity, fairness and respect are the principles of fair play. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fuelled by honest rivalry, courteous relations and a graceful acceptance of results.



Main Aim: To encourage club members to develop a basic understanding of the concept of Fair Play and the ability to apply this concept in all aspects of their lives.

Specific Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Exhibit an understanding of Fair Play by reading & writing about its important principles within the context of sport and physical activity
- Demonstrate the ability to value themselves and other people by showing fairness during sport and other activities
- Organize and conduct a variety of games and other activities, applying appropriate rules and regulations in both established and **new** games
- Identify instances of fair play and lack of fair play while involved in physical activity and sport

When Pierre de Coubertin revived the Modern Olympics, he set out to accomplish many goals – one of which was to bring the world together to compete in sport in “a spirit of Fair Play”. Fair Play is a virtue of rule adherence whereby players and athletes abide by the rules of competition. It is also a commitment to contest in a good spirit and encourages a good attitude towards sport that includes respect, modesty, generosity and friendship. Since Coubertin’s time, the Olympic Games have encountered more challenges to Fair Play than perhaps at first imagined. It is now more important than ever to educate players and athletes in the principles of Fair Play and to spread its lessons not only within the sporting world – but everywhere. This unit *Fair Play*, explores the history of Fair Play as it relates to sport and the Olympic Movement and looks at Fair Play as an essential component of both sport and life.

The term “Fair Play” covers both observing the rules and behaving in a sporting spirit. It demonstrates attitudes and behaviors in sport consistent with the belief that sport is an ethical pursuit. It does not include acts of violence, cheating, drug abuse or any form of exploitation in an effort to win. When elements such as these are introduced, the true competitive spirit is lost.

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Having a clearly defined set of rules and regulations for both recreational and competitive sport is essential in ensuring that sport is practiced in a fair, safe and enjoyable manner. With a clear set of rules, there is little room for disagreement or misunderstanding, albeit it is still possible. Although most sports people have good intentions during play, they can not be left to decide rules and rulings, as they occur. If everyone involved is aware of the rules beforehand, it should deter inappropriate behaviour and any violations can be dealt with appropriately. (ie: a yellow or red card in football, disqualification from an event, etc.) Rules and regulations are not only established to keep people in line and monitor Fair Play but can also enhance the enjoyment of the sport for everyone involved. Most recognized sports have an international federation which writes and upholds an extensive list of rules for their sport. However, it is important that at every level of sport players and athletes learn and respect rules and regulations from the grass roots level and up and do not leave it to the international bodies to enforce. If young people learn the value of respecting the rules then our future sports champions will grow up to value them also.

Further to following the rules – fair play describes the right attitudes of sportsmen and sportswomen and the right spirit in which they conduct themselves, showing respect for not only the rules but also for their opponents, officials and coaches. Fair play is the responsibility of each individual to participate in a positive manner, show good judgment and encourage the enjoyment of everyone involved. A game played with its rules strictly observed and its players exhibiting the right attitudes is enjoyable for everyone.

The ancient Olympic Games were protected with rules and laws so strictly enforced that the high standards of the competitions were maintained. Athletes who violated these rules were punished with fines, disqualification or public beating, according to the gravity of the offence. The most dishonourable infringement of the rules was submitting to bribery, since it was in total conflict with the original spirit of the Games, namely to compete with honour. Those who were found guilty of bribing their opponents were banned from competing and had to pay heavy fines. With these fines, they paid for the cost of the Zanes, the statues of Zeus which stood by the official entrance to the Stadium as a warning to the athletes not to cheat. This severe punishment proved to be a powerful deterrent to potential cheaters, and the ideal of honourable competition prevailed at Olympia.

Today, the Olympic Games are confronted by numerous attempts to undermine its principle philosophy of fair play and rule adherence. The major threat to fair play comes from the excessive importance now attached to winning. This pressure to be the best at any cost, to be “faster, higher, stronger”, has led to ever-increasing cases of violence, cheating, drug abuse and exploitation. However, while it is on this world-stage that we seem to take more notice of violations of fair play, it occurs at every level of sport and recreation and must be addressed at every level therefore. Even though the surrounding factors of fair play inside and outside of sport are difficult to change, and even though it is

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widely believed that the promotion of fair play in sport is a difficult task, ways and means have to be found to teach fair play and uphold its standards, from local recreational sport right through to international competitive sport level of the Olympic Games.

In recent times, the International Olympic Committee has taken an aggressive approach to protect one of its essential objectives – “... dedicating its efforts to ensuring that in sports the spirit of fair play prevails and violence (and other forms of corruption) is banned”. This objective was strongly reaffirmed at the 11th Olympic Congress in 1981, as the Congress’s final declaration stipulated that “every effort should be made to revive fair play and sportsmanship”. Almost twenty years later, in 1999, the IOC’s Executive Board set up an independent Ethics Commission to:

- maintain the Code of Ethics - based on the values and principles enshrined in the Olympic Charter
- monitor and ensure that ethical principles are respected, and conduct investigations when they are not
- when possible, prevent and advise the Olympic parties on the application of the ethical principles and rules.

Also in 1999, through a collective initiative led by the International Olympic Committee, the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) was created to support and promote fundamental values and fair pay in sport. With this historic associative act, sport organizations and governments are now united in their efforts to achieve completely drug free sport. This level of unprecedented solidarity constitutes today our greatest hope of eradicating the improper use of drugs in sport.

Fair play is a movement based on adhering to and respecting the rules and regulations of the game. Fair play initiatives however, are not solely directed at participants of sport – but also extended to those involved in sport; parents, teachers, coaches, referees, administrators, journalists, and spectators. They all have their own special responsibilities for the promotion of fair play – and it is an imperative for sport that each group recognizes these responsibilities and acts on them. Sport is a great training ground for real life - what has been gained in sport can be demonstrated in everyday life.

Since the inception of the modern Olympic Games, *Fair Play* has been a priority for its organizers. This is mainly because Pierre de Coubertin and his colleagues recognized the importance of rule adherence and contesting in good spirit as essential to the fulfillment, enjoyment and success of sporting competition – an ideal that they borrowed from their Olympic predecessors – the Greeks. The International Olympic Committee has been committed to instilling the values of fair play among its over 200 member nations, with the assistance of dedicated international sport organizations such as the World Anti-Doping Agency.

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Without well-established rules, a body commissioned to uphold them and the best intention of participants, officials, coaches and spectators to play by the rules and in good spirit, sport will not reach its full potential. Providing youth with an education about fair play, through theory and practice in the Olympic Club setting in the Seychelles could start a trend that carries from the club to the school yard, from the school yard to the local sports arenas and from the local sports arenas to the international ones! The value of teaching a child to “play fair” extends well beyond the sports field as well. It extends into their families, their schools and their communities. It is an integral part of their development as a good citizen and it should be taken very seriously by Olympic Club Facilitators.