

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR FAIR PLAY

MANIFESTO



Today sport has become an integral part of the life of all types of societies across the globe. It is constantly evolving, and it grows ever more popular, not only bringing pleasure to everyone involved, but also grave and increasing difficulties, while also raising questions. For it would be an illusion to assume that this intense and passionate human activity is intrinsically endowed with all the virtues.

Since 1963, convinced that FAIR PLAY IS A VITAL DIMENSION FOR SPORT, the International Committee for Fair Play has been striving to promote this deep conviction in a variety of ways to ensure that it is publicised, understood and shared. In 2010, is this kind of vision naïve, self-righteous, outdated or outmoded? Is the irreplaceable British expression, - "FAIR PLAY" -, whose meaning and nuances one only hopes to grasp or believes to understand, whereas no other language is able to express its exact and full equivalent in two words but a relic of a past era?

On the contrary, we believe that Fair Play, this positive notion of tolerance, is needed in sport today more than ever before; it is a priority.

It is our task, honour and responsibility to fight relentlessly and courageously while keeping our eyes on the target so that Fair Play would be increasingly recognised, rewarded and stimulated. The purpose of this manifesto is to propose in a clear and open-minded way principles to think and act along while affirming the absolute self-determination and free choice of all those practising sport.

1. **We believe** that sport is essentially a game in which people choose voluntarily to participate for the pleasure it provides. Moreover, in whatever form it may appear – whether it is sport for all, leisure sport, disabled sport or elite sport –, and even though it involves competition and confrontation, be it with others, oneself or the forces of nature, it has meaning because of its capacity to unite people and not divide them. Should not then each match and each encounter be a celebration shared by all?
2. **We believe** that in the sports venues, Fair Play, being the safeguard of loyalty and elegance of comportment, is the transposition of the spirit of justice that may incite a player even to refuse the decision of the referee that would favour him over the truth. For even if all sporting activities are regulated by a common code recognised and accepted by all participants in the entire world, a code that obviously incorporates Fair Play, the latter operates on a completely different level. We should declare it without hesitance: Fair Play speaks to our conscience. It is the result of a deliberate moral choice. Therefore, does it not constitute one of the essential cornerstones and foundations of sport?
3. **We believe** that sport should categorically refuse violence, lies and trickery. Can cheating be tolerated as mere cleverness by blind and permissive laxity? Are you not persuaded that it must be rejected consistently?
4. **We believe** that opponents are not enemies. Agression, which should be strictly distinguished from the fighting spirit, cannot be tolerated. In reality, adversaries are partners within the same community and by definition, the game of sport could not exist without them. When the party is over, the losers are just as important as the winners: do they not merit equal consideration?
5. **We essentially believe** that sport cannot be reduced to an obsession with winning or to the accumulation of trophies and medals. Fair Play is characterised by this refusal to snatch victory at any price. This kind of Fair Play needs to be adapted continuously to the effective and changing conditions of the practice. Is it not preferable to focus much more on the sports activity itself rather than the result?

6. **We believe**, for we are aware of the fact that Fair Play is a rich resource neither innately nor immutably acquired, that it requires a continuous and unrelenting effort of action, persuasion and most of all, education, at all levels and reaching out to all the components of the sporting community: athletes, coaches whose role should be quintessential, technicians, leaders, officials, clubs and federations, medical staff, spectators and television viewers. We are all affected. Thus, the work to be done is enormous and it demands an enduring zeal: in the form of demonstrations, publications, all kinds of communications at all levels, and for example, the awarding of trophies and distinctions highlighting the acts of Fair Play and their initiators. The value of such examples, both instantaneously and in the longer term, cannot be over-emphasised. Is not the media, with its huge direct influence, ideally placed to publicise the concept and the actions of Fair Play? But is it not the hardest battle to win?
7. **We believe** that school children and young athletes are at the heart of the fight for Fair Play. It must be among the primary concerns of their educators and trainers to instil this dimension of sport in young people whilst taking their sensibility into account. Researchers and universities have recently shown a growing interest in this subject. Fair Play could be seen to have special educational potential with respect to human and social relations for young people in helping them to construct a life in which they could transpose this knowledge.
8. **We believe**, in all modesty, that it is not utopian to extend our vision to consider building an existence around the experienced reality of Fair Play in sport. In fact, when the athlete engages in a sport, he exists simultaneously both in the game and the reality of life. Fair Play could then become a way of life, a rule of conduct for all, youth, adults and seniors alike, influencing their actions on and off the field of play. Sport could then provide reference points, and Fair Play could become a guiding light, a philosophy.
9. **Finally, we believe** that it is the task of the sporting community and in particular, the International Committee for Fair Play, in complete harmony with UNESCO and the Olympic Movement, to share its experience with the representatives of all other communities and cultures. It is, indeed, a deliberate moral choice originating from an ethical philosophy in accordance with the common values of humanity.

CALL FOR ACTION

If this new **MANIFESTO**, which has the objective of reinvigorating the true spirit of sport, and making it ever more present and vibrant by the genuine practice of Fair Play, has touched you,
and if you share our vision, our approach and our determination in facing the future,
we need you and your support.

We warmly invite you to join in our efforts to maintain and develop Fair Play, a major and inseparable dimension of Sport – for you and for us alike.

**NO SPORT WITHOUT FAIR PLAY
WITHOUT FAIR PLAY, THERE IS NO SPORT**