

Declaration
Sport and Fair Play in the 21st Century

Sport has many faces. Starting from the widest range of physical exercise, there's **competitive** sport, sport for **leisure**, sport for **health** - and in the last few years we have also seen the development of sport for **distraction and amusement**. There are many different ways of "doing sport": one person is after pleasure, another seeks the thrill, whilst still others simply want to have their bodies in good working order. Sporting activities offer countless people worldwide an outlet for their everyday "stress", and allows them to find both inner balance and intellectual stimulation.

That having been said, what we want to see on our television screens is sport of a very high level, charged with emotion. Sport is as varied and colourful as life itself. **Fair Play is one of the founding pillars of sport**. Adherence to "Fair Play" encourages joy and satisfaction in all forms of sport. It helps free the great potential that sport offers to people of all cultures.

The International Committee for Fair Play is making this multiplicity and this attractive quality of sport the basis of their idea of "Fair Play". It affirms and proposes **a broad, positive and realistic understanding of "Fair Play"**.

1. We cannot understand Fair Play unless we link it to moral values such as the spirit of justice, fairness, and human dignity. This "**broad**" vision makes Fair Play accessible to all and underpins all its specific applications.

Thus, respect, loyalty, tolerance and the healthy body are the marks of Fair Play in sport. Reciprocity plays an essential role in competition: one cannot do without one's opponent, and sport demands a respectful attitude towards the other; respect must go to the loser as well as to the winner.

In order for there to be justice, **equality of opportunity** is as necessary in sport for leisure as in competitive sports, and in the latter, it must exist at all stages of training. Fair Play calls for the greatest understanding of the social environment of competitors and of different cultures.

2. The notion of Fair Play leads one to a "**positive**" practice of sport. Experienced in this context, sport offers to its participants a pleasurable excitement. Only sport based on "Fair Play", where I have honestly committed to winning or losing, can bring me lasting joy and satisfaction. "Fair Play" is attractive. Hence its importance for the success of all forms of sports.

However, one does not often hear of “Fair Play”, except in negative circumstances, in the context of “sporting scandals”. It is necessarily by reference to Fair Play for example, that we reject doping, and the consequences of a growing and invasive commercialisation as opposed to the traditional norms and pedagogic model of sport; and reject as well the excesses of children’s high-level sports, the irregularities and brutality of the counter game, aggressive behaviour by spectators, or the growing influence of the media on high-profile sports.

So the notion of “Fair Play” is often associated with a negative meaning and image. On the contrary, **the International Committee for Fair Play underlines firmly the positive tenor of Fair Play and rejects all defensive comparisons and strategies.**

3. The International Committee for Fair Play **is not proposing a utopian idealist conception of “Fair Play”, but on the contrary a “realistic” notion orientated towards action.** Certainly, the ideal and its implementation are two sides of a permanent dialogue, the ideal marking the path to be followed in sport. In practice, one must adapt the ideal to the circumstances and effective conditions of sport, a concrete solution suited to our times, no matter what the everyday difficulties of situations and structures might be.

Based on a global analysis, the International Committee for Fair Play considers that five determining elements must be taken into account. The sense of **performance** – understood as engagement, without in any way equating this with violence. **The development and observance of rules** – that give sport its global standing, are dynamic and not immutable, but changes to which should not result from abuses originating in circumstances outside sport. **Respect** – of people and of sport itself, through which sport becomes a unique event whether it is a modest private act or an internationally-acclaimed gathering. **Health** – that of others, of team-mates and one’s own, above all must be fully preserved. Previously mentioned **equality of opportunity** – which means that we must be careful to ensure that conditions before, during and after the sporting activity must be the same for everybody. **It is only in linking these five factors that it becomes possible to give an overall image of “Fair Play” sport.**

4. For their part, **the media** rarely discusses model actions of Fair Play, even though there are thousands of them. However, in many countries national sporting committees or associations highlight acts of Fair Play annually in order to expose people to the possibilities of Fair Play in sport. For its own part, the International Committee for Fair Play each year awards the most prestigious trophies for fair play in the world – the Pierre de Coubertin Trophy for an act of Fair Play, the Willi Daume Trophy for the promotion of Fair Play, the Jean Borotra Trophy for a sporting career and life lived according to the principles of Fair Play. The Pierre de Coubertin Trophy carries the epigraph: “Better than a Victory”.

However, the **International Committee for Fair Play cannot limit itself to finding and rewarding exemplary actions and deeds** - even if it can do so for the most important international competitions. **It is committed to promoting the permanent practice of Fair Play in all aspects of sport.** The ideal of “Fair Play” is the guide,

showing that the ethics of sport cannot exist except on the basis of everyday practice thus constituted. It is in this sense that the ideal of Fair Play demands a constant effort in the practice of sport and does so even despite cultural differences and social environments that are sometimes obstacles.

The International Committee for Fair Play considers among its essential tasks the promotion of Fair Play throughout the world. It supports all representatives of sport in their efforts to ensure that all those who directly or indirectly are involved in sport get ever closer to the ideal of “Fair Play”. It is in this sense that the Committee wants to press for the transmission to all parts of the globe the idea of Fair Play and give fresh impetus to new initiatives to be developed in favour of “Fair Play” sport. **Its conception of Fair Play is not static or frozen, but open and expansive.**

5.

“Fair Play” belongs to everyone. All those who are involved in sport are responsible for ensuring it is a sport of “Fair Play”.

Sport is practised in every country, and in every culture: for this reason the concept of Fair Play must be understood and put into practice worldwide. And so must respect and tolerance be identified and applied on the basis of cultural differences.

Fair Play does not only have its place in games or in competition. It does not only prescribe behaviour for athletes, but also concerns all those who are linked to sport, such as: trainers, administrators, teachers, parents, spectators, doctors, sponsors and the sport media. Thus the ideal of Fair Play often demands, depending on the different groups, a different interpretation – for children, it means something other than for adults, for beginners something other than for high-level athletes.

Fair Play is Sport.

There is no Sport without Fair Play.

International Committee for Fair Play