

## (Re)building Society Around the Spirit of Fair Play

Of course, this broad term "Fair Play" is strongly associated with the world of sports, which has given it great nobility and a transcendent status.

Naturally, this noun encompasses many other attitudes related to the profound notion of respect—respect for others, respect for the rules.

By recognizing this dimension, our society must admit that its application cannot be limited to the realm of sport alone; it is a principle that should be the guiding motif of our collective lives.

This word, which should adorn the front of our stadiums, but even more importantly (and especially) our schools and civic spaces, should become (like gold once was!) the benchmark for measuring human behavior.

We are far from achieving this, even in the world of sport, which still harbors attempts to deviate from the rules and alter the course of things.

Are these sufficient reasons to give up? Quite the contrary—it should become the fuel that drives us to act everywhere and every day, to establish Fair Play as THE "virtue" that, at first on the margins, can provide other keys to being and living together in our often disoriented societies.

A huge project that can (and must) be implemented around these three pillars: Sport, Education, and Citizenship.

And the ultimate result will be a surge in the hope for Peace.

### **"Fair Play is Every Day"**

To show all those who are part of the vast family of sports that Fair Play is everywhere and every day, what better way than to compile actions and gestures that demonstrate its relevance? This compilation exists and is called the "Perpetual Calendar for a Fair Play World" ([https://worldfairplayday.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Calendar\\_365\\_WFPD\\_A5\\_FR.pdf](https://worldfairplayday.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Calendar_365_WFPD_A5_FR.pdf)), and it is available in all languages (<https://www.facebook.com/PanathlonWB/videos/le-fair-play-cest-tous-les-jours-aujourd'hui-le-7-septembre-nous-c%C3%A9l%C3%A9brons-le-wor/391521653143106/>). Together, these tools and messages are here to support and nourish this rich concept.

They give it color, show many of its facets, and inspire creativity to explore other avenues. Armed with this, the world (especially in sports) can reach all human circles and "equip" educators, teachers, physical education instructors, sports coaches, referees, officials, doctors, medical staff, trainers, parents, and all authorities directly connected with sport, etc.

All of them will be supported in their civic and sports actions by this collection of good practices

This collection must be shared, disseminated, enriched, and updated to make it an ever-evolving guide to the best practices in sport. This foundation will make a difference in reinforcing noble behaviors across all levels of society. And then...

### **... Field Action Rather than Moralism Speech**

Sports clubs, schools, and social groups must give Fair Play its rightful place. It must be more than just a mindset; it must be a social phenomenon that is discussed, debated, and enriched through practice and dialogue.

Education will give full dimension to the recognition of sport's values, which are universal values, starting from primary school.

By sustainably investing in schools through a dedicated program (ie "écoles fair Play" initiated by Panathlon Wallonie-Bruxelles/ <https://www.panathlon.be/action/ecole-fair-play/>), by integrating this curriculum alongside subjects like math or language learning, and by organizing "practical and playful" lessons on how to live well together through sport, the global educational world will create well-rounded minds that are also attentive to others.

This foundation will be indelible and will establish a new mode of relationships.

Similarly, by practicing in the same way during a large number of sports camps, whether specific to one sport or multisport (hundreds of thousands of such camps are organized worldwide during school holidays), sport as a whole will grow by embedding virtuous reflexes into young people's lives, essential for healthy sports practices. These new learnings, logically inserted during selected moments alongside physical or technical training, will leave lasting marks on the minds of young athletes, not only during their training sessions but also beyond.

Students and athletes will have ample opportunity to encourage their parents to become active participants, so that they too can play a positive role. In this way, encouragement will replace insults, applause will replace boos, and the mixing of nationalities will become a source of inclusion.

Thus, hand in hand, schools and sports will build the foundations of a harmonious model for society. This will also involve "student-athletes"!!

### **... And Then the Art of Bringing Fair Play into the Spotlight**

Bringing Fair Play into the spotlight at all times, giving it a prominent place in the media, collecting and broadcasting real and beautiful moments of sport, and adding a dose of healthy creativity worldwide to give this magical attitude a place in society—this is the goal.

When we talk about the media, we mean not only traditional press but also the ever-present social networks, television and radio channels, both private and public, not to mention the communication

tools of millions of sports clubs around the globe, the information screens in sports centers, and stadiums.

This unique information network will establish Fair Play as a "superstar" word, viral and strengthening its ambassadors to continue the work started on the ground.

And if that is not enough, let's mobilize energy to keep the word alive through special operations such as "Kilometers of Fair Play" (a sort of revisited SportAid), or by creating events to honor actions, careers, gestures, and attitudes with an abundance of awards recognizing their authors or talents.

Let's ensure that the entire sports community (except where initiatives already exist) calls for Fair Play Awards in clubs, federations, cities, and municipalities, even at the supranational level, and give them all the visibility they deserve. These "new heroes" of sport, these ambassadors of values, will give sport its true dimension.

Then we can say that society has truly embraced the spirit of Fair Play... and the world of sport will be able to affirm that "Fair Play is a Sport."

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