

The European Sports Charter

(adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 September 1992)

Article 1

Aim of the Charter

Governments, with a view to the promotion of sport as an important factor in human development, shall take the steps necessary to apply the provisions of this charter in accordance with the principles set out in the [Code of Sports Ethics](#) in order:

1. to enable every individual to participate in sport and notably:

a. to ensure that all young people should have the opportunity to receive physical education instruction and the opportunity to acquire basic sports skills,

b. to ensure that everyone should have the opportunity to take part in sport and physical recreation in a safe and healthy environment,

and, in co-operation with the appropriate sports organisations:

c. to ensure that everyone with the interest and ability should have the opportunity to improve their standard of performance in sport and reach levels of personal achievement and/or publicly recognised levels of excellence.

2. to protect and develop the moral and ethical bases of sport, and the human dignity and safety of those involved in sport, by safeguarding sport, sportsmen and women from exploitation from political, commercial and financial gain, and from practices that are abusive or debasing, including the abuse of drugs.

Article 2

Definition and Scope of the Charter

For the purpose of this Charter:

1. "Sport" means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.

2. This Charter complements the ethical principles and policy guidelines set out in:

a. the [European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in Particular at Football Matches](#);

b. the [Anti-Doping Convention](#).

Article 3

The Sports Movement

1. The role of the public authorities is primarily complementary to the action of the sports movement. Therefore, close co-operation with non-governmental sports organisations is essential in order to ensure the fulfilment of the aims of this Charter, including where necessary the establishment of machinery for the development and co-ordination of sport.
2. The development of the voluntary ethos and movement in sport shall be encouraged, particularly through support for the work of voluntary sports organisations.
3. Voluntary sports organisations have the right to establish autonomous decision-making processes within the law. Both governments and sports organisations shall recognise the need for a mutual respect of their decisions.
4. The implementation of some of the provisions of this Charter may be entrusted to governmental or non-governmental sports authorities or sports organisations.
5. Sports organisations should be encouraged to establish mutually beneficial arrangements with each other and with potential partners, such as the commercial sector, the media, etc, while ensuring that exploitation of sport or sports people is avoided.

Article 4

Facilities and Activities

1. No discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status, shall be permitted in the access to sports facilities or to sports activities.
2. Measures shall be taken to ensure that all citizens have opportunities to take part in sport and, where necessary, additional measures shall be taken aimed at enabling both young gifted people, but also disadvantaged or disabled individuals or groups to be able to exercise such opportunities effectively.
3. Since the scale of participation in sport is dependent in part on the extent, the variety and the accessibility of facilities, their overall planning shall be accepted as a matter for public authorities. The range of facilities to be provided shall take account of public, private, commercial and other facilities which are available. Those responsible shall take account of national, regional and local requirements, and incorporate measures designed to ensure good management and their safe and full use.
4. Appropriate steps should be taken by the owners of sports facilities to enable disadvantaged persons including those with physical or mental disabilities to have access to such facilities.

Article 5

Building the Foundation

Appropriate steps shall be taken to develop physical fitness and the acquisition of basic sports skills and to encourage the practice of sport by young people, notably:

1. by ensuring that programmes of and, facilities for, sport, recreation and physical education are made available to all pupils and that appropriate time is set aside for this;
2. by ensuring the training of qualified teachers in this area at all schools;
3. by ensuring that appropriate opportunities exist for continuing the practice of sport after compulsory education;
4. by encouraging the development of appropriate links between schools or other educational establishments, school sports clubs and local sports clubs;
5. by facilitating and developing the use of sports facilities by schools and by the local community;
6. by encouraging a climate of opinion in which parents, teachers, coaches and leaders stimulate young people to take regular physical exercise;
7. by providing education in sports ethics for pupils from primary school onwards.

Article 6

Developing Participation

1. The practice of sport, whether it be for the purpose of leisure and recreation, of health promotion, or of improving performance, shall be promoted for all parts of the population through the provision of appropriate facilities and programmes of all kinds and of qualified instructors, leaders or "animateurs".
2. Encouraging the provision of opportunities to participate in sport at work places shall be regarded as an integral part of a balanced sports policy.

Article 7

Improving Performance

The practice of sport at higher levels shall be supported and encouraged in appropriate and specific ways, in co-operation with the relevant sports organisations. The support will cover such areas as talent identification and counselling; the provision of suitable facilities; developing care and support with sports medicine and sports science; encouraging scientific coaching and coach education and other leadership functions; helping clubs to provide appropriate structures and competitive outlets.

Article 8

Supporting Top level and Professional Sport

1. Methods of providing appropriate direct or indirect support for sportsmen and women who reveal exceptional sporting qualities shall be devised in co-operation with sports organisations, in order to give them opportunities to develop fully their sporting and human capacities, in the full respect of their individual personality and physical and moral integrity. Such support will include aspects related to the identification of talent, to balanced education while in training institutes, and to a smooth integration into society through development of career prospects during and after sporting excellence.

2. The organisation and management of professionally organised sport shall be promoted through appropriate competent bodies. Practitioners engaging professionally in sport should be provided with appropriate social status and protection and with ethical safeguards against all forms of exploitation.

Article 9

Human Resources

1. The development of training courses by appropriate bodies, leading to diplomas and qualifications to cover all aspects of sports promotion shall be encouraged. Such courses should be appropriate to the needs of participants in different kinds and levels of sport and recreation and designed for both those working voluntarily or professionally (leaders, coaches, managers, officials, doctors, architects, engineers, etc).

2. Those involved in the leadership or supervision of sports activities should have appropriate qualifications paying particular attention to the protection of the safety and health of the people in their charge.

Article 10

Sport and Sustainable Development

Ensuring and improving people's physical, social and mental well-being from one generation to the next requires that sporting activities including those in urban, open country and water areas be adjusted to the planet's limited resources and be carried out in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and balanced management of the environment. These include:

1. taking account of nature and environmental values in the physical planning and building of sport facilities;
2. supporting and stimulating sports organisations in their efforts to conserve nature and the environment;
3. increasing people's knowledge and awareness of the relations between sport and sustainable development and their understanding of nature.

Article 11

Information and Research

Suitable structures and means for the collection and dissemination of pertinent information on sport at local, national and international levels shall be developed. Scientific research into all aspects of sport shall be promoted. Arrangements shall be made for diffusing and exchanging such information and the results of such research at the most appropriate level, locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

Article 12

Finance

Appropriate support and resources from public funds (at central, regional and local levels) shall be made available for the fulfilment of the aims and purposes of this charter. Mixed public and private financial support for sport should be encouraged, including the generation by the sports sector itself of resources necessary for its further development.

Article 13

Domestic and International Co-operation

1. Appropriate structures for the proper co-ordination of the development and promotion of sport, both between the various public administrations and agencies concerned by sports questions, and between the public and voluntary sectors, shall be developed if they do not already exist at central, regional and local levels in order to achieve the aims of this charter. Such co-ordination will take account of other areas of policy making and planning such as education, health, social services, town and country planning, environment, the arts and other leisure services, and ensure that sport is an integral part of socio-cultural development.
2. Co-operation at European and International level is also necessary for the fulfilment of the aims of this charter.

Code of Sports Ethics

Fair Play - The winning way

(adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 September 1992)

Aims

The basic principle of the Code of Sports Ethics is that ethical considerations leading to fair play are integral, and not optional elements, of all sports activity, sports policy and management, and apply to all levels of ability and commitment, including recreational as well as competitive sport.

The code provides a sound ethical framework to combat the pressures in modern-day society which appear to be undermining the traditional foundations of sport - foundations built on fair play and sportsmanship, and on the voluntary movement.

The primary concern and focus is fair play for children and young people, in the recognition that children and young people of today are the adult participants and sporting stars of tomorrow. The code is also aimed at the institutions and adults who have a direct or indirect influence on young people's involvement and participation in sport.

The code embraces the concepts of the right of children and young people to participate and enjoy their involvement in sport, and the responsibilities of the institutions and adults to promote fair play and to ensure that these rights are respected.

Defining fair play

Fair play is defined as much more than playing within the rules. It 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. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal) exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

Fair play is a positive concept. Sport is cultural activity which, practised fairly, enriches society and the friendship between nations. Sport is also recognised as the individual activity which, played fairly, offers the opportunity for self-knowledge, self-expression and fulfilment; 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.

Responsibility for fair play

Involvement and participation in sport among children and young people takes place within a wider social environment. The potential benefits to society and to the individual from sport will only be maximised where fair play is moved from the peripheral position it currently occupies to centre stage. Fair play must be given the highest priority by all those who, directly or indirectly, influence and promote sporting experiences for children and young people. These include:

- governments: at all levels, and including agencies working with governments. Those involved in formal education have a particular responsibility.
- sports and sports-related organisations - including sports federations and governing bodies; physical education associations, coaching agencies and institutes, medical and pharmacological professions and the media. The commercial sector including sports goods manufacturers and retailers and marketing agencies also has a responsibility to contribute to the promotion of fair play.
- individuals, including parents, teachers, coaches, referees, officials, sports leaders, administrators, journalists, doctors and pharmacists; role models who have achieved levels of sporting excellence and those who work on a voluntary or professional basis. Individuals may also have responsibilities in their capacity as spectators.

Each of these institutions and individuals has a responsibility and a role to play. This Code of Sports Ethics is addressed to them. It will only be effective if all involved in sport are prepared to take on the responsibilities identified in the Code.

Governments

Governments have the following responsibilities:

- to encourage the adoption of high ethical standards in all aspects of society within which sport operates;
- to stimulate and support those organisations and individuals who have demonstrated sound ethical principles in their work with sport;
- to encourage the education profession to include the promotion of sport and fair play as a central part of the physical education curriculum;
- to support all initiatives aimed at promoting fair play in sport, particularly amongst the young, and to encourage institutions to make fair play a central priority in their work; - to encourage research both nationally and internationally which would improve our understanding of the complex issues surrounding young

people's involvement in sport and which identifies the extent of poor behaviour and the opportunities for promoting fair play.

Sports and sports-related organisations

Sports and sports related organisations have the following responsibilities:

In setting a proper context for fair play

- to publish clear guidelines on what is considered to be ethical or unethical behaviour and ensure that, at all levels of participation and involvement, consistent and appropriate incentives and/or sanctions are applied;
- to ensure that all decisions are made in accordance with a Code of ethics for their sport which reflects the European code;
- to raise the awareness of fair play within their sphere of influence through the use of campaigns, awards, educational material and training opportunities. They must also monitor and evaluate the impact of such initiatives;
- to establish systems which reward fair play and personal levels of achievement in addition to competitive success;
- to provide help and support to the media to promote good behaviour.

When working with Young People

- to ensure that the structure of competition acknowledges the special requirements of the young and growing child and to provides the opportunity for graded levels of involvement from the recreational to the highly competitive;
- to support the modification of rules to meet the special needs of the very young and immature, and put the emphasis on fair play rather than competitive success;
- to ensure that safeguards are in place to prevent the exploitation of children, particularly those who demonstrate precocious ability;
- to ensure that all those within or associated with the organisation who have a responsibility for children and young people are qualified at an appropriate level to manage, train, educate and coach them, and in particular that they understand the biological and psychological changes associated with the development of the child.

Individuals

Individuals have the following responsibilities:

Personal behaviour

- to behave in a way which sets a good example and presents a positive role model for children and young people; not in any way to reward, to demonstrate personally, nor to condone in others unfair play and to take appropriate sanctions against poor behaviour;
- to ensure that their own level of training and qualification the needs of the child as they move through different stages of sporting commitment.

When working with young people

- to put as a first priority the health, safety and welfare of the child or young athlete and ensure that such considerations come before vicarious achievement, or the reputation of the school, club, or coach or parent;
- to provide a sporting experience for children that encourages a life-long commitment to health related physical activity;
- to avoid treating children as simply small adults but to be aware of the physical and psychological changes that occur during maturation and how these affect sporting performance;
- to avoid placing expectations on a child unrelated to his or her capacity to meet them;
- to make the enjoyment of the participant a priority and never place undue pressure which impinges on the rights of the child to choose to participate;
- to take as much interest in the less talented as in the talented and emphasise and reward personal levels of achievement and skill acquisition in addition to more overt competitive success;
- to encourage young children to devise their own games with their own rules, to take on the roles of coach, official and referee in addition to participant; to devise their own incentives and sanctions for fair or unfair play; and to take personal responsibility for their actions;

- to provide the child and young person and child's family with as much information as possible to ensure awareness of the potential risks and attractions of reaching levels of high performance.

Summary

Fair play is an essential part of successful promotion, development and involvement in sport. Through fair play, the individual, the sports organisations and society as a whole all win. We all have a responsibility to promote fair play - the winning way. Qui joue loyalement est toujours gagnant.