

Is fair play losing value in grassroots sport?

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Sport has become a representative event of society since it is conceived as an adequate means for the personal and social development of positive values. In school-age sport, the phenomenon of fair play is a relevant topic in today's society. Fair play culture does not promulgate the formation of weak players, worried about creating good relations and carefree about the result itself. Fair Play supposes a total delivery attitude during the game. Therefore it is not at odds with the competitiveness, it includes but with certain premises. First, from recognizing themselves the mistakes they are made, in an attempt to improve. Secondly, understanding that sporting success does not have to be translated exclusively to victory, but rather teaches a complete reading of the game, which values the effort and personal improvement. Additionally, it is concerned with the level of play developed and it appreciates friendly relationships with peers and opponents. Last but not least, it proposes to practice sport from the simple enjoyment of the game, from an altruistic perspective in which the fun for the game is a value in itself.

At the same time, sport also promotes anti-social behaviour such as gamesmanship and cheating. With regard to cheating, it is conceived as the search for illegitimate gains, the concealment of real intentions. Cheating is only successful if the victim and / or the referee or judge believes that everything has been correct. Consequently, cheating refers to infractions of the rules to obtain an incorrect benefit, which includes a certain degree of successful cheating.

This brings us to the idea that the social environment in which our young athletes develop is susceptible to external influences, mainly those that come from the coach and the peers, becoming a fundamental pillar in the explanation of the behaviour, emotions and cognitions of the athlete. As a consequence, prosocial behaviours and desirable personal qualities for athletes can be achieved through the correct orientation of sports practices carried out by significant agents.

Thus, the role of coaches, teachers and peers has a direct influence on young athletes through their behaviours and the interactions they create. This influence is reinforced by the theory of achievement, which attempts to determine whether the motivational climate perceived by athletes can lead to antisocial sports behaviours. Thus, it is necessary to create a mastery climate that minimizes the incidence of antisocial behaviours and promotes prosocial behaviours extrapolated to other domains.

The study of sportsmanship and Fair Play, although analyzed from yesteryear, remains a matter of current affairs. Numerous researchers show the need for an ethical treatment of physical activity (Kavussanu and Spray, 2006; Lamoneda, García, Córdoba and Vizúete, 2014). Moreover, scientific literature is scarce in studies on the acceptance of behaviours antisocial such as cheating and gamesmanship of young athletes. Therefore, taking into account the aforementioned argumentation, it is necessary to investigate this subject in a systematic, rigorous and scientific manner due to its great relevance in grassroots sport.

It is much more likely to find acceptance in team members that a partner uses gamemanship (nervous or deconcentrating an opponent) to use the trap, which implies the violation of the regulation, which has been proven in this study (Palou et al., 2013). Both the use of gamemanship and trying to deceive the opponent is more easily accepted when the player's disposition is ego-oriented (García-Mas et al., 2015).

Method

The objective of this study is to analyze relationships between the attitudes towards fairplay, gamesmanship and cheating in young athletes of Balearic Islands. The sample includes 35 teams in football, basketball and handball with a total of 1172 young athletes (949 boys and 223 girls) with a mean age of 12.50 years and a range of age between 10-16 years of the categories juvenile, infantile and cadet during 2016-2017 season to whom were given the Spanish adapted version of the *Questionnaire of Disposition to Cheating in Sport* (CDED, Ponseti et al, 2012); and the *Fairplay Attitudes Scales* (EAF, Boixadós, 1998).

Results

Results show that our young athletes rate positively sport as a funny activity. Cheating, not being delimited and ruled, is becoming progressively accepted mainly in football. Cheating, for its part, is not commonly accepted. Gamesmanship, cheating and hard play correlated positively with the victory factor and negatively with fun. Regarding sex, men get higher score in the so-called antisocial behaviours of sport while women get higher score in prosocial behaviours of sport.

Discussion

An important idea observed with the results seems to be that grassroots sports respond better to the interests of adults and clubs than to the needs of young athletes. Likewise, the moral development of young athletes weakens when they observe unsportsmanlike behaviours of professional athletes who, through cheating or violent behaviour, try to achieve success at any price. In spite of everything, sports educators think that the positive or negative view of participation in sports practice is determined and depends on the guidance given by the organizers of sports competitions, referees, judges, coaches, as well as the role of parents, friends and, in general, the audience attending school competitions.

In conclusion, results show the imperative need to carry out an exhaustive study of intervention programs for the enhancement of fair play behaviours in the different sports disciplines taking into account the differential characteristics of each one of them. It makes necessary an adequate evaluation of sport contexts. With this formula, one could more rigorously understand the appearance of unsportsmanlike behaviours such as cheating and gamesmanship.

Key Words: Fairplay, Gamesmanship, Cheating, Victory, Fun.

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