

# Sporting fans and players are what makes playing games so special

FAITH IN SPORT

## Mgr Vladimir Felzmann

In sport, as in life, there are occasional sparks of brilliance, spotlighting humanity at its best.

Cristiano Ronaldo thanked Liverpool fans for their minute's applause during their recent victory over Manchester United. Reds supporters had joined the tribute to Ronaldo, who missed the Red Devils' defeat following the tragic death of his new-born son on Monday.

On Saturday 23rd April, Arsenal fans paid a similar touching tribute to Cristiano, whose shirt carries the number seven, by dedicating a minute's applause to the Manchester United forward in the seventh minute of their Premier League clash at the Emirates Stadium.

Another of these 'moving moments' had occurred on 19th March at the Principality stadium, Cardiff. After Italy's victory over Wales, which ended Italy's run of 36 straight championship defeats, man of the match, Wales' Josh Adams, gave his award to the Italian Ange Capuozzo, whose brilliant run through the Welsh defence enabled his teammate, Edoardo Padovani, to score a late, winning try. Italy won 22-21. Chapeau, Josh!

In my opinion, your generosity, Josh, and respect for your opponent, earned you the Top Man of Sportsmanship award.

Some popular examples of good sportsmanship include shaking hands, helping an opponent who may have fallen over, encouraging everyone, cheering, clapping or giving a high-five. Being respectful to everyone, including teammates, the opposition, parents and officials, is also to be commended.

Jim Courier, an American former world No. 1 tennis player, said: "Sportsmanship for me is when a tennis player walks off the court and you really can't tell whether they won or lost, when they carry themselves with pride either way." He won four major singles titles, two each at the French Open and the Australian Open. He was the youngest man to reach the singles finals of all four majors, at the age of 22 years and 11 months. He also won five Masters titles.

Good sportsmanship is when people who are playing or watching a sport treat each other with respect. This includes players, parents, coaches, and officials.

Paul Brown (1908-91), both the co-founder and first coach of the Cleveland Browns, a team named after him, who later played a role in founding the Cincinnati Bengals,

Ronaldo points to the sky in a gesture to his dead son, after scoring against Arsenal



had some sensible advice. "When you win, say nothing; when you lose, say less," he said.

Mildred Ella 'Babe' Didrikson Zaharias (1911-56), was an American athlete who excelled in golf, basketball, baseball and track and field. She won two gold medals in track and field at the 1932 Summer Olympics, before turning to professional golf and winning 10 LPGA major championships. She said: "If you win through bad sportsmanship, that's no real victory."

Good sportsmanship is important because it makes competitive play more enjoyable for everyone. While winning might feel like the most important thing during sporting events like tennis matches or basketball games, good sportsmanship teaches competitors how to be

gracious and respectful towards others.

The 2005 Ashes is remembered as one of the most evenly contested Test series ever played. Regardless of the intense battles on the field, England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff's gesture towards a heartbroken Brett Lee after England had won by just two runs caught everyone's attention. As the home team burst into celebrations, Flintoff ran towards a deeply dejected Lee and consoled him, even congratulating him for his fighting spirit that had almost taken the Aussies past the finish line.

An instance in the 2003 World Cup semi-final changed the way world cricket would look at Aussie wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist. Whilst batting, he tried to sweep a full delivery off Sri Lanka's Aravinda de

Silva, but ended up edging the ball to keeper Kumar Sangakkara.

Surprisingly, Umpire Rudi Koertzen turned down the Sri Lankan players' appeal. However, knowing that his bat had touched the ball, Gilchrist started walking towards the pavilion. He was, and still is, hailed for his gentlemanly and honest behaviour.

In a 2007 League Cup tie between Leicester City and Nottingham Forest, with Forest leading 1-0, Leicester defender Clive Clark collapsed in the dressing room during the interval.

With Clark's life seemingly in danger, the two teams decided to abandon the tie. A replay was arranged three weeks later. The kick-off of the replay brought up a moment that will remain etched in the minds of all football fans for

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eternity. The whole of Leicester's side stood to one side to allow Forest keeper Paul Smith to restore the lead they had in the previous game. Smith then walked the ball into the net unopposed. Hats off to the Foxes!

In 2012, German striker Miroslav Klose, playing for Lazio, admitted to using his hands to push the ball over the line. On account of Klose's admission, the referee rescinded the goal which he initially had given.

In Holland, while playing for Ajax against SC Cambuur, Jan Vertonghen, then aged 19, tried to give the ball back to the opposition goalkeeper after they had sportingly kicked the ball out of play for one of Vertonghen's team-mates to receive treatment. He accidentally put the ball into the opponent's net. The apologetic Vertonghen then ordered his team-mates to stand aside to allow the opposition to walk the ball into their net to restore parity. A gentlemanly act of the highest order.

Virtues associated with – evidence of – sportsmanship are fair-play, truthfulness, integrity, justice and team-spirit. Its hallmarks include being able to win without gloating, respecting one's opponents, and being able to lose gracefully. These virtues can be transferred from sport into daily – even family – life.

Good sportsmanship builds teamwork, character, and teaches discipline, honour, inclusion, kindness, perseverance, resilience and respect.

When children enjoy active play, not only are they less likely to become obese and more likely to stay healthy, but they also look forward to sports and exercise as a chance to make new friends and develop new skills.

Why not make sure that you praise a colleague who has gained promotion, a promotion which perhaps you were after? To avoid causing pain to others, if you get a promotion, why not keep the celebrations low key? Here's an important principle to instil in your children: "If you lose, carry the can. Don't make up excuses."