

Ethics: The Needed Balance in Life and Sport

“The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight; the essential thing is not to have won, but to have fought well”

(Baron Pierre de Coubertin – a French educator and a founding member of the International Olympic Committee)

Since time immemorial, it has been stated that true sportsmanship lies in not just winning titles, but doing so in a fair manner which glorifies the victory further. It is also said that friendship often grows from noble rivalries – then why not create a culture of healthy competition and fair play? Whether as athletes, officials, coaches or supporters, we must all take cognizance towards ensuring that sport is fun as well as fair for all.

Take for instance the 2011 test match at Trent Bridge between India and England. At the stroke of tea, Ian Bell was run out in what could have been one of the most controversial decisions in cricket ever. After running three, Eoin Morgan held up his arm to Bell, who jogged halfway down the pitch and then continued walking down. By that time, Bell had punched gloves with his partner and was heading towards the pavilion for tea, unaware that at the other end, he was being run-out.

After being declared out at 137 runs, the English captain then went to the Indian dressing room to request for an overturn of the decision, and MS Dhoni accepted it. England applauded the move and the crowd cheered on when they saw Ian Bell return to the field after tea.

Back in February 1980, with everyone gathered at the Wankhade stadium, for the golden jubilee match between India and England – and the golden moment of this match was when skipper Gundappa Vishwanath displayed an extremely noble gesture of calling back Bob Taylor after umpire Hanumant Rao had declared him out. This not only moved the crowd there but also cricket fans around the globe. India lost the match but won the hearts of the people. 40 years hence, this gesture still remains a benchmark for ethics and morality.

23rd September 2001 – the grand finale of Champions league – Oliver Kahn was awarded a Fair Play Award by UEFA for his camaraderie. Instead of celebrating like the rest of his teammates after Valencia had just lost to Bayern Munich on penalties, Kahn went over to a distraught Santiago Canizares (Valencia’s goalkeeper) to comfort him. Canizares was shattered after losing the game and broke down in the end.

Without thinking twice, Oliver Kahn went straight up to him to be by his side. This incredible act of kindness displayed by the titan goal-keeper establishes the fact that the game doesn’t end with winning, it is also about uplifting one another and developing bonds that shall last a lifetime. These gestures and emotions make any profession pleasing and aid the individual associated with that profession bloom beautifully.

Corporates have published codes of ethics basis which, it conducts business. The code of ethics, set forth the standards to which employees are expected to abide by and also held

accountable. Most companies flourish because they successfully manage to uphold ethical standards and enforce them in the right manner.

It is incumbent upon every employee to ensure they familiarize themselves with their employer's ethical code of conduct for the benefit of the employee and employer alike. Professionals with upstanding values and ethical standards are easy to identify, as is the company that employs them.

Whether in sport or in life, it is important that in our quest to do better, we refrain from getting swayed away to the wrong side. Ethics is not something one can learn from a textbook. Instead, it is an attribute that manifests itself in our behaviour towards other stakeholders in society. More often than not, it is ethics that hold the capacity to unite people in a world where things such as sports, religion, culture, politics, and nationalities divide humans.