

Respect: As in sports, so on the corporate track

“You play for respect and pride!” – Rahul Dravid

Respect and thoughtfulness are concepts that are slowly diminishing in the present era. In sports also, we often see umpires or referees giving incorrect decisions and a lot of the times, players have perhaps shown disrespect or negativity towards them.

This reminds me of a popular and controversial incident which happened in 2007 where the umpiring decision had gone wrong by Simon Taufel – one of the best umpires in the cricketing world. The legendary Sachin Tendulkar was on the receiving end. He was given Out incorrectly on 91 during the Trent Bridge Test between India and England. Of course, he was livid with the umpiring decision but walked away without much reaction. Taufel, however, recalled that decision on an episode of 22 Yarns podcast hosted by Gaurav Kapur stating, “The following morning, I happened to pass by Sachin on my normal morning walk, and I said, ‘Look yesterday I got it wrong, you know? I looked at it and I got it wrong.’ He said, ‘Look Simon, I know.’ He continued, ‘You’re a good umpire, you don’t often get it wrong. It’s okay, don’t worry about it.’

This is the kind of greatness that one misses in today’s world. Without a doubt, Sachin is thought of as a humble and respectful cricketer.

Another example: 2016 Rio Olympics. Nikki Hamblin, an athlete from New Zealand, helped out Abbey D’Agostino when she tripped and fell on the track and seriously injured her leg. With 2000 metres left, Nikki sacrificed her own Olympic race and the two of them completed the race together displaying “Olympic spirit” for which they were awarded the ‘fair play’ Olympic award.

This clearly shows that respect encapsulates empathy and compassion. On one hand, some may be of the opinion that showing respect relies solely on shaking hands with one’s opponents once the game ends. From my experience in both, the corporate world as well as the sports arena, respect embodies much more than that.

It is an imperative constituent of one’s own identity as well as the relationships one has with the rest of the stakeholders. It wouldn’t be wrong if I say that the sporting arena has contributed a lot in terms of teaching me about this particular quality; sports provides an environment to grow and establish respect.

As a sportsperson, one learns the importance of respecting their coaches, team-mates, opponents and spectators. These are the exact qualities that come in handy in the world of work too. While interacting with the clients, employees, leaders or any stakeholder, what sets an individual a notch above the rest is the way they practice these qualities in their actions.

As late Jesse Owens stated:

“In the end, it’s the extra effort that separates a winner from second place. But winning takes a lot more than that, too. It starts with complete command of the fundamentals. Then it takes desire, determination, discipline, and self-sacrifice. And finally, it takes a great deal of love, fairness, and respect for your fellow man. Put all these together, and even if you don’t win, how can you lose?”