"The great thing about sport ... is that it doesn't matter what your background is, your cultural upbringing, your language or colour or religion, or even who you barrack for ... everyone on the field is worthy of being there. Everybody is respected. Differences in culture or background fade into the turf as it were. Success hinges on respectful relationships and relying on your team mates ... Everybody has to help each other otherwise teams don't work. That's what we need to do with our country."

 Professor Mick Dodson, Australian of the Year 2009, Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia, Australian Football League Industry Conference, November 2008.

Introduction

In 1999, in the lead up the Sydney 2000 Olympics, Australia hosted the first International Conference on Sport and Human Rights. Eleven years later, Australia is at the cutting edge of applying the ideas that arose from this conference in practical programs which use sport to educate about human rights principles.

In this paper, I will explain why sport is emerging as such an effective teaching and learning methodology for human rights education across the globe.

I will do this by exploring three successful Australian programs - *Play by the Rules; Human Rights are Aussie Rules* and the *AFL's Peace Team* – which all use fair play and good sportsmanship to educate young people and communities about human rights. Some emphasis will be particularly given to the Human Rights are Aussie Rules Program of which I am co-ordinator.

Finally, I will reflect on commonalities of approach within these programs, providing a guide to human rights educators wanting to incorporate sport and game theory in their work.

How You Play the Game: *The First International Conference on Sport and Human Rights*.

Australian's are mad about sport. On the Federal Government website, sport is promoted – only barely tongue in cheek - as our national religion. Sport dominated all forms of media

and taps into deeply held myths of national identity. But this anecdotal and theoretical evidence of the reach of sport pales next to the ABS data.

Consider the following:

- 66% of Australian's play a team sport.
- 25% of Australians aged 15 years and over participated in sport and outdoor activity each day with Children aged 9-11 having the highest participation rate of any age group at 70%
- One third of the population attends an Australian Rules Football Match annually.
- Australian households spend an average of \$15.70 per week on selected sports and physical recreation products.
- Armchair sports fans drive high television ratings with nine of the top 10 highest rated shows in 2005 being sports programmes.ⁱ

So it makes sense that the first international conference on sport and human rights took place here in 1999, midway through the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. Hosted by Human Rights Council of Australia, it aimed to explore the contribution of sport to the promotion of human rights through a multi-disciplinary meeting of academics, lawyers and sports administrators.

In the key note address on Ethics and Moral Behaviour in Sport delivered by Dr Doris Corbett, then President of the International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance, she observed:

"Sport has universal value, and is a social movement striving to contribute to the development of a peaceful and better world. Society expects many important and worthwhile things from sport and uses sport to support various fundamental social values and ethical principles such as equality for all people, fair play, respect for the loser, friendship, solidarity, justice and democracy, international peace and understanding."

Over 30 papers ⁱⁱⁱwere given at this conference focussing on the rights of children, athletes, the role of Boycotts and Olympic principles and drug testing and rights. Like many talk fests, these papers could have disappeared from memory, locked away. Instead they have helped shape some of the human rights education programs I will talk to you about today.

The conference was ahead of its time and would herald in an emerging global trend – strongly supported by the United Nations – the use of Sport for Development and Peace.

The historic relationship between Sport and Human Rights

Although using sport in education for human rights, development and peace is cutting edge, the relationship between sport and human rights can be traced back to antiquity. The Ancient Olympic Games, which took place between 776BC – 398 AD did so during a recognised truce between states in one of the earliest examples of respect for Humanitarian Law. Sport again played a role in facilitating peace on the battlefields of World War 1 during the 1914 Christmas Day Truce.

Sport has also provided a very public platform to expose human rights abuses across the globe. At the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the achievements of Jesse Owens undercut Adolf Hitler's glorification of Nazism and white supremacy. The gloved fists of African American sprinters highlighted civil rights abuses in the USA in 1968. And in the 1980's sport boycotts helped end Apartheid in South Africa.



The Right to Sport – sport and international human rights instruments and initiatives

The relationship between sport and human rights is also referred to in a number of international instruments. Although there is no specific "right to sport" found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) or any of the other major human rights treaties there is coverage in most documents of rights to rest, leisure, physical and mental health.

International protection of the right to sport has been championed by UNESCO, firstly in 1964 through work it undertook with the International Council of Sport and Physical Education. The Declaration on Sport, though now only a text of historical interest, does provide a useful definition of sport.

Sport

 Any physical activity which has the character of play and which involves a struggle with oneself or with others, or a confrontation with natural elements is a sport"

- 2. If this activity involves a competition, it must then always be performed with a spirit of sportsmanship. There can be no true sport without the idea of fair play.
- 3. Sport thus defined is a remarkable means of education. iv

15 years later, UNESCO adopted the first International Charter of Physical Education and Sport^v, which enunciated for the first time sport and physical activity as a fundamental human right. This right was reinforced in 1989, with the enactment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the creation of a Right to Play.

UNESCO's work laid the foundations for the United Nations General Assembly to adopt a resolution on sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace. In 2005 the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) was established heralding an international movement that is yet to reach critical mass.

Why Sport

There is one tool that is simple to use, that is inexpensive, and that is powerful. And that tool is sport.

- Mr Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace^{vi},

There is growing recognition that well-designed, sport-based initiatives can be a powerful, simple, low-cost and effective means to achieve development and peace objectives including those pertaining to furthering childhood development.

This is because sport is a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries and is enjoyed all over the world. Sport encapsulates human values such as respect for the opponent, acceptance of binding rules, teamwork and fairness^{viii}.

The rules of sport, so widely accepted and followed in Australia and the world, are incredibly similar to Human Rights principles. The Human Rights are Aussie Rules project, about which you will hear more in a few moments, has developed a comparative table which illustrates the point effectively.

Table 1. Comparative Table of Human Rights and Rules of Fair Play

Human Rights Principle	Rule of Fair Play		
The Right to Freedom and Equality	The right and ability of to play sport regardless of age, sex, race, religion or nationality.		
The right to express cultural difference	The right to wear "team colours".		
Freedom of religion	Freedom to support your team and worship sporting heroes as "Gods"		
Freedom of movement and assembly	Freedom to sit where you like at a game, join supporters groups		
The right to a fair trial (unbiased courts, presumption of innocence, freedom from arbitrary detention and exile)	The right to an independent umpire, sporting judiciaries and legal representation at same.		
Freedom of thought and expression	The right to chant and make banners supporting your team.		
Right to life, liberty and security of person; Freedom from torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment.	Rules about fouls, striking, obstruction and dangerous play.		
Freedom from slavery	The right to choose where when and how you play sport, right to withdraw from the game		
Freedom to elect representatives	The importance of democratic sporting bodies – Leagues, Teams, Players' organisations.		

This table was produced in 2007 response to community consultations held prior to and after the introduction of the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*, where the Eastern Community Legal Centre became convinced that sport – the rules of fair play and good sportsmanship – could convert human rights from technical legal principle and purely aspirational motherhood statements into something practical, easy to understand, especially for young people.

A year later, to coincide with the Beijing Olympics and the 60th Anniversary of the UDHR, the United Nations released *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments*, which set out a platform for National governments to use sport to combat 5 global problems - disease and health, education, gender inequality, inclusion of people with disabilities and the promotion of peace-building^{ix}. The document indentified four reasons why the United Nations uses sport for development and peace:

- 1. Sport has Universal Popularity
- 2. Sport connect people and communities
- 3. Sport is a communications platform
- 4. Sport is cross-cutting
- 5. Sport has potential to empower, motivate and inspire

Although the importance of sport and physical activity has long been recognised as preparing the child physiologically and psychologically for life; to understanding the importance of output for effort, the development of will, applying social adaptability and testing leadership skills, the use of sport in teaching human rights is far from mainstream.

In the Australian Human Rights Commission's *rightsEd*, a series of online resources for teachers, while there are lots of case studies to explore, art to look at, poetry and scripts to interpret or perform and DVD's to watch – there is no sport or physical activity based human rights learning module. In a country where sport is so profoundly connected to the Australian way of life, this is more than a mere oversight, it is a lost opportunity.

By connecting human rights and sport, human rights educators tap into the goodwill towards sport, an accepted and fundamental part of the Australian way of life, and thereby transpose goodwill to the concept of human rights.

Three programs in Australia are at the cutting edge of the global program of Sport for Peace and Development. Each of them leverage sport in different ways. One promotes human rights dialogue *in* Sport, the other uses sports metaphors to promote human rights, while yet another uses sport to demonstrate peace-building in action.

Australian Initiatives in Sport for Human Rights, Development and Peace

1. Play by the Rules^x



Play by the Rules is a one stop, online shop of information for sportspeople and sporting clubs to encourage respect and equality on the sports field. It provides information for community sport and recreation on how to:

- prevent and deal with discrimination, harassment and child abuse, and
- develop inclusive and welcoming environments for participation.

Understanding that common issues confronting sporting clubs and athletes are unlikely to initially informed by human rights principles, the website focuses on helping the navigator identify an issue from a range of potential challenges that arise in sport - from verbally abusive coaches, to the appropriate boundaries for physical contact, how to combat sexual and homophobic harassment, the importance of Inclusion for people with disabilities to the right to play while pregnant.

Play by the Rules makes a recommendation on What to do Now, What to do Next and Where to go for Further Information, in relation to each topic with responses tailored to meet the needs of four difference sports audiences – administrators, coaches, players and parents.

Of course, the website also contains information about complaint mechanisms and legal rights and responsibilities. But it is significant that this is not the starting point for interaction.

The website's real usefulness however, is demonstrated by the dynamic, online learning module which educates sporting clubs, coaches and players on how to respond to a range of realistic conflict scenarios from a human rights centres perspective. Interactive and engaging, the scenarios offer participants the option to choose a range of different responses to each situation, with *Play by the Rules* acting as a critical friend when a less than ethical or rights centred response is provided.

Play by the Rules is a unique partnership between the Australian Sports Commission, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, all state and territory sport and recreation and anti-discrimination agencies and the Queensland Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian.

In addition to its web presence, the project provides regular training on sport and inclusiveness through State and Territory Human Rights Commissions, a rights centred toolkit for sports clubs and undertakes education campaigns.

The project brings human rights principles into sports administration in a non-threatening, sport-centred way. It expands the meaning of sports rules to encompass human rights principles. Although the site is easy to read, clear and interactive, it is clearly geared to sporting clubs, rather than the athletes themselves. It is also not geared to young people.

The next project in contrast is completely child-centred. It also uses sport as a metaphor, but this time rules of fair play and good sportsmanship become the means by which to inform young people about human rights.

2. Human Rights are Aussie Rules project

"Just as we could not conduct a fair game of footy without an independent umpire, then so too we need an independent legal system to resolve disputes and address inappropriate behaviour. Just as rules outlaw striking and fouls are taken seriously in sport, so too we're all entitled to go about our lives without threat of violence. Alternatively, can you imagine going a footy final without the freedom to wear your team colours, sing your team song or barrack for your favourite footy legend?"



- Deputy Premier and Attorney-General for Victoria Rob Hulls, Annual Human Rights Dinner, July 2010.

The <u>Human Rights are Aussie Rules Project</u>^{xi} teaches children, young people and their families about four complex human rights principles – Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity (FRED Principles) – in accessible language everyone can understand. That language is sport. It does this by comparing well known rules of fair play on the sports field to human rights principles outlined in the UDHR and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

The program uses multifaceted teaching methods to convey this information including:

- a. A 45 minute theatre production, FRED's Fair Play,
- b. A 60 minute interactive *Human Rights are Aussie Rules* workshop using game theory to explore FRED principles,

- c. A Classroom Kit for students and teachers to incorporate into daily curriculum,
- d. A mass participatory game, Handball for Human Rights.

The first phase of the program's development focussed on performance of FRED's Fair play at Community Festivals. In 2009-2010 the development of the Handballs for Human Rights Competition and the piloting of a Human Rights are Aussie Rules Workshop for primary schools has occurred. The third phase will see an expansion of the schools program, along with a leap into online gaming for kids.

The Program is the initiative of the Eastern Community Legal Centre in Victoria but is supported by a multi-disciplinary advisory board including sports people, human rights and sports lawyers, artists and educators, including representatives from the AFL's Multicultural Development Unit, Sports Without Borders Foundation, the Australian Centre for Human Rights Education and The Castan Centre for Human Rights.

Development of the Project

The Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) developed the project with a small grant from the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of \$5000. ECLC worked with theatre-in-education specialists, Carp Productions, to develop a script and a forty minute performance - FRED's Fair Play - exploring human rights through sport.

Since then FRED's Fair Play has been performed at over twenty Community Festivals and at the request of local councils, schools and NGO's. It has been seen by over 8000 young people and their families. In 2009, the Victorian Attorney-General launched the schools program and since then a further 3000 students have participated in workshops, while another 1000 young people and their families have played *Handball for Human Rights* at community festivals. This includes indigenous youth in Arnhem Land, where the program was invited to participate at the 2010 Garma Festival.

The project purposes are to:

- provide extracurricular education on human rights to young people in primary and secondary schools in the absence of National and State Human Rights Curriculum
- teach human rights in a way that is child-centred, respecting their interests,
 experiences and ideas and that is fun, interactive and playful

• engage with young people in a way that is memorable, sustaining a lifelong connection between fair play on the field and in life.

The program has been acclaimed by students, teachers, human rights advocates, sports administrators and Government. The project was Runners Up in the National Children's Law Awards 2010 and personally reviewed by Federal Attorney-General Robert McClelland in the lead up to the Government's Response to the National Human Rights Consultation. A funding injection from The Victorian State Government will enable further development of the program.

The Human Rights are Aussie Rules Workshop focuses on four, 15 minute quarters of learning involving case studies and interactive games. Each quarter focuses on one human right principle and uses a game to illustrate a point.

Table 2. The Four Quarters

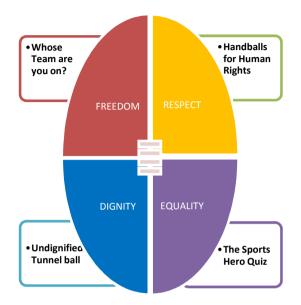


Table 3 Analysis of the Four Quarters – Purpose, Charter Principle and Human Right.

Quarter Name	Quarter Summary and Purpose	Charter Principle	Human Right (Articles of the UDHR)
1. Whose Team are you on?	Children explore freedoms and minority rights through chants and cheers for a team of their choice.	FREEDOM	Freedom of Association and assembly (Article 20) Freedom of Thought and Religion (Article 18) Freedom of Speech (Article 19)
2. Handballs for Human Rights	Children aim for FRED principles on a vinyl banner while a disrespectful, biased umpire looks on	RESPECT	Equality Before the Law (Art 7) Fair and Public Hearing (Art 10) Presumption of Innocence (Art 11)
3. The Sports Hero Quiz	Children discuss gender equality by comparing the media's treatment of women and girls in sport	EQUALITY	Right to recognition before the law (Article 6) Right to privacy (Article 12) Right to work, just conditions and equal pay (Article 23)
4. Undignified Tunnel ball	Children learn about the uneven playing field of life by playing tunnel ball with a tennis ball, netball, soccer ball and a football	DIGNITY	Right to life, liberty and security (Article 3) Right to seek asylum (Article 14) Right to social security, economic and social rights (Article 22)

My favourite game to play is Undignified tunnel ball, where instead of a regulation medicine ball, four team s are given a tennis ball, football, soccer ball and netball each. The game is clearly unfair, leading into discussions about the uneven playing field of life. Listening to a child of 11 describe how to fix an unfair game in what amounts to a startlingly intelligent application of affirmative action principles is simply amazing.

Human Rights are Aussie Rules is child centred, focussing on the interests of young people. This is why it is making a significant attempt to engage with new social media. Footage of FRED's Fair Play is available for download on YouTube, young people can become fans of FRED on Facebook and plans are underway to develop an online game of mobile phone application that encourages young people to be human rights heroes.

3. Australian Football League's Peace Team

While sport alone cannot prevent conflict or build peace, it can assist in peace-building. Peace building is a continuous process ranging from the prevention of violence, to humanitarian relief and early recovery, to the long-term construction or reconstruction of society. Through sport, we can engage those people whose lives and livelihoods are at risks. Through sport, we can reconnect the social bonds and interactions between families, neighbourhoods and local communities that have been torn by violence.



 Wilfried Lemke, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, IOTF International Forum on Sport, Peace and Development, Olympic Museum, Lausanne, 7 May 2009

The Australian Football League's Peace Team is a unique and unlikely collaboration between the Peres Centre for Peace in Israel and the Australian Football League. Established in 2008, the project united young Palestinian and Israeli men in sporting competition against other international teams during the AFL International Cup.

The Middle East conflict exposes young people to violence and war on a daily basis, helping to exacerbate (and prolong) the deep resentment and hostilities that first began before their birth. By introducing Israelis Palestinians – representing all of the Abrahamic religions - to a

foreign football code with the aim of participating in an international sporting competition, animosity was replaced by teamwork and fair play with bonds of friendship forged between players.

The brainchild and passion project of the brothers Demetriou – Andrew the outspoken CEO of the AFL and his older brother James, a social entrepreneur and sports administrator who founded the Sports Without Borders Foundation – the Peace Team became the crowd favourite at the 2008 AFL International Cup. Coached by AFL legends Robert Dipierdomenico, Ron Barrassi and Kevin Sheedy, the team, went on to win only one game. The real results however were – the creation of a national jumper - Gold with the Peres Centre logo, a dove, symbolising peace – and a team song (sung to the Hawthorn Club Song)

We're the footy team for peace
We glide the oval with ease,
With passion and strength we are free
To unite to Victory!

While adults slog out a two-state solution – young people and the AFL are creating flags and a national anthem for unity.

Not surprisingly, the AFL Peace Team has received high praise, been the subject of a documentary *Tackling Football* and was recently highlighted at the World Conference of Religions hosted in Melbourne.

This is sport in its highest form – a catharsis of conflict – where pitching physical strength over an opponent always falls short of actual domination^{xii} or tyranny. By playing a team sport, young people who would otherwise be in conflict with each other are forced to recognise the similarities of mind and body, to engage in problem solving and to communicate and trust one another.

The AFL is not the only sporting body in the globe using sport to promote peacebuilding. The Cross Cultures Project Association (CCPA) is a humanitarian non-profit association based in Copenhagen, Denmark, with local branch offices in various countries promoting Open Football Schools. Open Football Schools take football to war-torn regions to rebuild friendship and trust amongst young people. The project began in the Balkans but has expanded to Azerbaijan Iraq, and Lebanon and many other locations.

Of course, the AFL's advocacy for Human Rights is not contained to working to address the Middle East Conflict. It continues to be a national leader in providing education and opportunities for talented indigenous youth to climb out of poverty. Today around 8% of AFL players are indigenous, a number well ahead of population ratios^{xiii}. There is alot more to the AFL's outreach work in isolated and remote locations than exploiting young talented aboriginal footballers. Sports clinics are becoming the glue that keeps indigenous kids in school and responsibility for better health outcomes.

Human Rights Education which uses sport as a vehicle for learning

Although each of these programs is unique, they share five common beliefs about the power of sport to educate for and advance human rights: That sport:

1. promotes positive values in people

Sport is one of those rare activities which call upon the body, mind and the will all at the same time^{xiv} Sport and physical activity programs are widely believed to be powerful vehicles for teaching children and youth social and life skills and acquiring positive attitudes, values and morals. Some of these skills are team-building, communication, Problem-solving, community, self-esteem, personal responsibility, empathy, moral development; resiliency and improved inclination for educational achievement.^{xv}

2. encourages active participation and engagement in human rights

Sport acts a motivator to learn about human rights by presenting students with an opportunity to run around in the shoes of others; to wear a different team's colours and thereby develop empathy and understanding. Sport transforms complicated human rights principles like Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity - into easy to understand concepts. Because human Rights acquire their meaning in practice – in the reality of daily lives – sport provides a useful entree for human rights to tap into deep, meaningful experiences.

3. Ensures human rights education is genuine and lasting

A measure of successful learning is that the learner is able to recall and apply what they have learned in relevant contexts and situations in the longer term. Sports universal popularity makes it the perfect vehicle for educational engagement. Educating about human rights through sport elevates otherwise dry, technical legal discussion into a fun exercise which energises individuals and groups.

Sport appeals to the child in us all. Creating a child-centred, secure, supportive, stimulating and stress free environment^{xvii} to discuss human rights ensures that the learning is genuine and lasting.

4. Demonstrates the power of Fair Play

"Fair play is the essence of any game or sport that is worthy of the name and is as essential in professional or amateur sport. Fair play requires not only strict, but also glad and willing adherence to the rules, both in the letter and in the spirit. It implies respect for one's opponent and for oneself."

Sports constant moral self criticism – a complete honesty towards ones opponent, even in the heart of the most strenuous contest - is this attitude of mind which makes it possible for sport to make its priceless contribution to human rights and international understanding.^{xix}

5. Is conflict catharsis

Finally. sport is a cathartic release of conflict – in the expending of energy, physical strength and opposition within a safe environment bounded by rules of engagement – the need for other forms of conflict resolution - violence and war - to settle disputes is diminished. Sport has a real role to play in peace building between peoples and nations.

Sport and Human Rights – answering the cynics.

Of course there will be always critics of sport and its capacity to deliver human rights education outcomes.

There will be those who believe that using sport to talk to young people and communities about human rights over simplifies complicated, delicately balanced human rights principles, reducing education to "human rights lite" What I say to these people is the secret to education lies in respecting the pupil. That means human rights education must appeal to people, be relevant to their daily lives and not engage in an exercise of talking down from a lofty legal high. These ideas are as significant to the way human rights activists educate the community on human rights as they are in classrooms. **xi

There will also be people who draw attention to the ongoing sport scandals – the incidence of racial, religious intolerance and sexual misconduct of players as another reason to deride sport as an educational tool. My response to that is simple. Sport is a microcosm of life. It is not perfect. Many other professions suffer from the same incidents of discrimination and intolerance - lawyers, medical professionals, teachers, police officers. But only sport – because of the treasured place it has in the lives of so many people – receives the level of

public attention needed to change behaviours. Human Rights abuses in sport are an opportunity for educators, not a threat.

Conclusion

The secret to human rights education lays in respecting sport.

For too long we have thought of the international human rights framework only_as legal texts forming a body of international law. Yet they are so much more. Not least the human rights framework is the only_codification of commonly held universal and internationally recognised values.**

In the words of Francesca Klug, architect of the British Human Rights Act, human rights education through sport is an idea whose time has come. Through this unexpected but creative alliance, new life will be breathed into the idea of human rights, positioning human rights educators and advocates to occupy a more prominent position domestically and internationally.

In 2002, Eric Sidoti challenged a group of teachers to "resist attempts to corral human rights by consigning their consideration to legal studies or thinking of 'human rights education' only in terms of teaching about human rights. This is why I look to the outcome of the National Human Rights Consultation not with regret over lost opportunities to create a Human Rights Act, but with "confidence, with optimism and with a sense of daring" that we have an opportunity to create an innovative human rights education in Australia.

Through sport we will kick goals for human rights and leave a lasting mark on the nation.

Tanja Kovac is a community lawyer, lobbyist and Co-ordinator for the Human Rights are Aussie Rules project at the Eastern Community Legal Centre. She has acted in human rights cases on behalf of marginalised people since beginning legal practice in 1999. She is also a poet and writer and National Co-ordinator of women's human rights group, EMILY's List Australia.

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