

Peace Club Promotes Soccer to Make Peace

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Why soccer? In most countries of the world soccer is a powerful social force, perhaps the most powerful social force in some places. It is even compared with religion.

There is increasing concern in every society about where and how values are shaped and shared—not just any values, but good values, i.e. virtues. Though there are attempts from inside some soccer organizations to articulate messages of hope and respect, the vision is not clear. What role does soccer play? What role can it play?

Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)—the (the main organizing body for world soccer)—informs us that there are approximately 300 million people actively involved in playing soccer around the globe. That number is for organized soccer, in amateur and professional leagues. It does not even include the many young kids throughout the world kicking a ball around in the playground, in the streets, out in the open air, or just playing "for fun." FIFA goes on to say that the circle of influence of these 300 million probably reaches at least 5 five more people, i.e. parents, family, and friends. This suggests that soccer has the potential to reach almost two billion people! But with what kind of influence? What is the soccer culture? What values lie within the sport? If values do exist, do they uplift and help make the soccer community a positive force for good? Or is it random, sometimes good, sometimes not? Who can say? Who cares?



Robin Graham from Irvington, New York seeks help to fund Peace Club – Play Soccer, Make Peace.

In the news recently was the horrendous story out of Brazil of a soccer referee who had in an altercation with a player. The referee killed the player with a knife and was then in turn killed, quartered, and beheaded by the angry crowd. What kind of culture is that?

Do not despair. There are many conscientious people working within soccer organizations who see that soccer can be a force for good and they recognize that the role of coaches as leaders and mentors can be significant, even pivotal.

This is the area of work of Peace Club. We give the coaches a system of values which is simple to deliver and is carefully laid out for the coaches to pass on to the young players. Not in a classroom, but out there in the field during practice. Simple, universal and relevant values, which are recognized around the globe. They are common to all cultures, all religions. In this sense soccer can be truly global when the players embody these universal values. It is even popular and accepted in countries where a "competing" world religion may be outlawed.

These are values found within the game itself that lead the players to aspire for excellence, both personal and on the team, but also for excellence in society and excellence in character.

Peace is not a blissed-out paradise. Peace is active, engaged, a place for competition, but where there is responsibility for behavior and respect for people.



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I have been working in this non-profit sector centered on soccer for 10 years. Peace Club is the best opportunity yet to deliver a much needed values education to soccer youth and to bring a steady influence to the world of soccer. The banner of "Play soccer, Make peace" has proved to be hugely successful. The first step was to hold tournaments which brought former antagonists to play together and encouraged new conversations and steps toward reconciliation. The second step is education.

Peace Club trains the trainers—the coaches. Coaches typically dedicate long hours, often voluntary or with little pay, to pass on their passion for soccer to young players, girls and boys, who love to play. The Peace Club values help them do that. Those coaches usually remain in coaching for five to 15 years and longer. They are committed.

Help me to help them. Let's shift the culture. Support Peace Club here: <http://igg.me/at/PeaceClub>.

The coaches already teach the technical ball skills and the soccer tactics.

Peace Club brings them the values needed to have players perform at their best in the game while on the field, but those same values are also needed to perform at their best off the field, in their families, in school, in college, and in their work.

Peace Club works with the coaches to prepare young soccer players to be "champions in life".