

International sporting events provide an ideal opportunity for schools to rally enthusiasm for sports and promote important values such as commitment, determination and teamwork. **Crispin Andrews** shares a series of activities for key stages 1 and 2 related to some of the year's most celebrated sporting events.

Primary schools are making good use of their PE and sport premium money, and pupils' PE skills are improving, according to an Ofsted report released last October¹. The previous month, a survey commissioned by the Department for Education suggested that children in nine out of ten primary schools are getting better PE lessons because of the new funding.²

Last year, the government gave primary schools £150 million a year for the next two years, ring-fenced to help them deliver more and higher quality PE and sport. The money, worth more than £9,000 a year to a primary school with 250 pupils, goes directly to headteachers. Ministers say the premium, which will continue until 2020, is enough to pay for a PE teacher two days a week.

Sports in the spotlight



October's Ofsted report looked at 22 schools, previously identified as performing well in PE and sport, to see how well they'd been using their money.³ The report found that PE and sport is generally in good health. However, inspectors also advised schools to do more to encourage those pupils who are less keen on PE and sport to take part and enjoy the activities, and to introduce activities to allow their most able pupils to realise their full potential. How can schools do that?

Following major sporting events

The DfE's own research into the primary premium found that pupils benefited, personally, as a result of going to a school that was doing more and better sport. Ninety-six per cent of schools surveyed said pupils were fitter and healthier since they've had primary premium money. Ninety-three per cent said pupils are behaving better.⁴

In June 2014, however, Ofsted produced another report criticising state schools for not delivering competitive sport as well as the independents.⁵ Ofsted commissioned this report because the previous year, according to another of their reports, only a minority of schools were giving their children the chance to play sport to a high standard.⁶

There is no doubt that the highest standard of sport played is on the international field, during major events such as Wimbledon, the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics. Media coverage of these events provides schools with a great opportunity to get children into sport and to encourage them to develop and refine their skills to play at the highest standard possible.

Major sporting events are easy to follow; these days, they are covered extensively on television and in the national press. A large number of internet sites will also present information, as will most radio stations.

For the less physically capable pupils, top-level events demonstrate that sport is more than just running, jumping and kicking a ball; it's also about thinking, planning and decision making. Major sporting events also raise lots of issues, discussion of which will help pupils in their lives as learners and critical thinkers – fair play, the need to follow rules and team work for a start.

The Ashes: Umpires, rules and fair play

England play Australia at cricket in five Test matches during July and August in a 131-year-old sporting contest called the Ashes.

England played Australia at cricket from 1877, but it wasn't until England lost a series of matches to Australia in 1882 that anyone spoke about ashes. The newspaper, *The Sporting Times*, joked that English cricket had died, been cremated and its ashes would be taken home by the victorious Australians. Taking up the theme, the England captain, Ivo Bligh, pledged to bring back these ashes when his team toured Australia later in the year. He won and came back, so it is said, with an urn full of the burnt stump bails from one of the games. The nickname stuck, and the Ashes urn is now in the Lord's cricket ground museum. If the Australians win, they take home a replica.

Cricket is supposedly all about fair play. But teams still want to win and that means umpires. Since the 1990s, Test matches have been overseen by umpires from neutral countries. Before that, the home team provided the umpires. Ashes umpires now come from India, Pakistan, New Zealand, West Indies, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. But they still make mistakes. Today, technology helps umpires get it right.





Take run outs and stumpings, for example. In a split second, the batter hares towards the crease in one direction, the ball is thrown in even faster from another direction, the wicket keeper breaks the stumps, and finally, there's the white line of the batting crease to look at. Often, the batter is only a few centimetres short or over the line. An umpire would need four pairs of eyes, all working in unison, to get it right every time. Slow motion video replays from several different camera angles, watched by a third umpire in the pavilion, get it right every time.

Third umpires in the stands also have tracking technology to help them decide on lbws (leg before wicket), and a snickometer and 'hot spot' infra-red technology to help them decide whether a batsman has edged a ball for a catch. Today, in Ashes Tests, each captain can challenge two umpiring decisions per innings. The decision is referred to the third umpire in the pavilion, who has the technology. If the on-field umpire is wrong, their decision can be overruled. The old timers would turn in their graves.

Activity 1: Do we need rules?

Discuss:

- Do we need someone to govern the rules in a game? In very early football matches in the 19th century, the two captains would decide between them what was allowed and what was not. Would that work today?
- Is technology good or bad for sport and for the people who play it?
- Is it possible to design a game with no rules? What needs to happen to prevent chaos?

The Ashes' biggest ever controversy happened in 1932-33 when England's captain, Douglas Jardine, found a way to tame the great Australian batsman,

Don Bradman. During his career, Bradman scored almost twice as many runs per game as any other cricketer, before or since. Jardine ordered his fast bowlers to bowl at the Australians' legs. Jardine called it leg theory. The press called it bodyline. It caused outrage, and questions were asked in Parliament.

Today, when a batsman can't play fast bowlers and their bouncers, he is said to lack the mental strength to play international cricket. Word soon gets round, and bowlers everywhere send down a barrage of bouncers, eager to exploit the weakness.

Activity 2: A gentleman's game?

Back then, the Australians called Jardine's bodyline tactics unsporting; cricket is supposed to be a gentleman's game. Were they right? Did the England captain overstep the mark, or was he just using his resources (Australia didn't have any decent fast bowlers) to try and win?

Discussion objectives:

- Why are rules needed and how can they be made and enforced?
- Should rules promote fairness?
- Should rules ever be challenged or changed?
- What is it like to make and change rules?

Although widely regarded as one of the greats, controversy always surrounded former Sri Lankan cricketer, Muttiah Muralitharan.

The laws of cricket state that a bowler may not bend and then straighten their arm (i.e. throw) more than 15 degrees when bowling, as to do so would allow the bowler to impart more speed or, in Muralitharan's case, spin on the ball. Over the years, several umpires accused Muralitharan of 'throwing' – particularly when bowling his doosra (Urdu word meaning 'the other one'), which sent the ball spinning away from a right-handed batsman.

In his defence, Muralitharan claimed that a physical deformity prevents him from being able to straighten his right arm. Some commentators believe that the recent changes in the throwing law to allow a greater degree of bend have actually been introduced to accommodate Muralitharan. Others claimed that scientific research had apparently shown it is physically impossible for a person not to bend their arm to some extent when releasing the ball.

Activity 3: Who has the advantage?

- In pairs, throw a ball back and forth. Which method – underarm, overarm/straight arm, or overarm/bent – allows the most speed and spin to be imparted on the ball?
- It's a three-a-side striking and fielding game – batting team vs. bowling team – three turns per player, highest score wins. The bowler can throw the ball overarm/bent arm to their opponent. What are the results of this on the relationship between batter and bowler, and on the game? Who gets the advantage? If necessary, come up with a new rule to make things fair.
- What would happen if there were no rules in this game and each player could do whatever they chose? Or if the sides were uneven in terms of numbers? In what situation might it be fair to have uneven numbers? Are there any ways in which the game, if played as 'two against three' or 'three against four', can be modified to make it fair?
- Should rules – like the handicap system in golf – be introduced to help a person of less ability compete on a par with a more talented player?
- Design your own three-a-side striking and fielding game. Explain the rules and why they make the game fair.

Disgraced Pakistan cricketer Mohammed Amir recently re-started his career after a ban for match-fixing. Amir was found guilty of deliberately bowling no-balls under orders from his captain Salman Butt, who was working with illegal bookmakers. These bookies took bets on certain things happening at certain times during a game, then paid off certain players to make sure those things didn't happen. That's fraud.

Activity 4: Ensuring fairness and respect for all

Pupils design:

- a. A fair play charter for the playground, PE lessons, or for school sports teams; or
- b. A code of conduct for parents and other spectators at school sports matches.

Find a good example of a code of conduct for players, teachers and spectators from Bengoe Primary School in Hertford here: www.bengeo.herts.sch.uk/page/?pid=69. A more detailed charter can be found here: www.newtownafc.co.uk/about/charters-and-policies/fair-play-charter.html.

Rules can sometimes – either deliberately or inadvertently – discriminate against certain people. For example, prior to the breakup of Apartheid, South Africa did not permit non-whites into its sports teams. Now, the team is multi-racial. In fact, a quota system exists to prevent an all-white South African cricket team from being selected. There must be a certain number of non-white players in every South African cricket team.

Is this fair? Should the team be picked on merit? Or are quotas necessary to make allowances for people who may not have had the same life chances to compete on an even playing field?

Former England star, Kevin Pietersen, was born and raised in South Africa. In his formative years, he felt the quota system unfairly prejudiced his chances of playing provincial cricket and so decided to move to England to continue his career.

Activity 5: How should teams be picked at school?

Design a way of organising groups or teams in PE lessons. Consider:

- Will the nature of the group depend on the activity and its purpose?
- What effect will the method of selection have on the individuals and the eventual teams? For example, if the weakest player is chosen last but still has to play – will this person lose confidence, underperform and, as a result, inhibit their team's performance?
- South African government would argue that having teams more representative of their new nation is more important than having the strongest team on the field. If sport in schools is about encouraging everyone to adopt a healthy lifestyle, should selection processes in PE lessons or for school teams take this into account – or should they just be done on merit? Is it right that the best ten or so sports players should represent the school at everything?

Wimbledon: Developing ball skills

The pinnacle of the international tennis calendar, the Wimbledon Championships are in many ways bigger than British tennis itself. The Lawn Tennis Association struggles to generate regular, sustained mass participation at grass roots level and, Andy Murray aside, fails to compete with other nations when it comes to producing top level talent; yet for two weeks every June, the eyes of the world are fixed on 1200 acres of land in south London.

When playing tennis or any of its modified versions such as squash, badminton, volleyball or even water polo, there are common skills and tactics that need to be learnt. These include:



- sending and receiving a ball or other similar object
- directing a ball towards a target area
- directing the ball away from an opponent or into an area which makes it difficult for their opponent to return it
- positioning themselves in an area which makes it easier to return a ball when it is sent to them
- utilising throwing, catching and striking techniques developed in other areas of the games curriculum.

Activity 6: One bounce

Teams: Two teams of two to three players

Equipment: Any type of ball and net of any height. Can be played using racquets or by striking the ball with the hand

Aim: Like tennis, pupils score points by directing the ball into certain areas of the opposition's half of the court, and stop the opposition from scoring by preventing the ball from bouncing more than once on own side of the court.

Rules:

- Teams have up to three passes within their own half before attempting to shoot into the target areas in the opposition's half.
- If they score, their team has another go. If not, the game continues, with the opposition taking control of the ball and repeating the process.

Teaching points:

- Where are the best places to shoot from?
- How can you draw defenders away from the areas you want to shoot into?
- What type of throws are most effective for passing? Which are most effective for shooting?
- What areas of your half are most important to defend?
- What should you do when your team loses the ball? What should you do when you win it back?

Activity 7: Bounce and catch

Teams: Groups of six – two hitters, one feeder, two receivers and one ball collector (children should alternate roles)

Equipment: A number of tennis balls, one racquet for each hitter, any height net

Aim: Pupils score points by directing the ball into target areas of the opponent's part of the court.

Rules:

- Feeder throws the ball to the player standing at the back of the court, who aims to hit it over the net to bounce once into one of the target areas on the other side of court.
- If receivers can catch the ball after one bounce, they score a point. If they can catch it before it bounces, they score five points. Receivers have to decide where to start off – at the net or further back.
- If receivers start at the net, will the hitter try and send the ball over their heads? If it doesn't first-bounce inside the court, the hitter scores no points. If it does and passes the receivers, the hitters score a point.
- Feeders should initially underarm the ball to the right side of a right-handed striker, allowing them to perform a forehand shot. Once a degree of proficiency has been gained, the ball should be fed to the left side of a right-handed striker, giving them a chance to perform backhanded shots.

Activity 8: Hit the target

Teams: Groups of four – two players, two scorekeepers (one for each player) – children should alternate roles

Equipment: One tennis ball per group, wall with target areas marked, stopwatch

Aim: To score points by throwing the ball and hitting target areas as many times as possible in three minutes.

Rules:

- Player one throws ball at the wall aiming for target area, player two then has to catch the ball before it bounces twice and take their turn to throw the ball at the target area. Player one repeats.
- If the player is unable to catch the ball before it bounces twice, the other player's score for that throw is doubled. If a player misses the wall target altogether, they lose a point.

Teaching points:

- Where should you stand when your opponent is throwing the ball?
- Could you attempt to deceive your opponent about the direction the ball will take after it is thrown against the wall?
- Could you use the angle of the throw against the wall to take the ball away from your opponent, or to make them throw from a position where it is difficult to hit the target?

Differentiation:

- Have more able players throw from further away or at smaller target areas. Ask players to catch the ball before ball bounces.
- Support less able players by giving them larger target areas, allowing three or four bounces before the ball must be caught, or using a larger/sponge ball.



Euro 2016: Maximising performance

In the run-up to football's Euro 2016 next summer, Europe's best players will train as part of a team, in small groups and on their own. Just like children in PE classes, they'll need to develop, apply, evaluate and refine their skills and tactical awareness.

The following activity can be used as part of a class Euro 2016 event or a standalone game. Children work in teams of four and devise their own training schedule. What does each team need to practise to maximise their performance?

Watch Germany, the reigning World Champions. They are the masters of using space when attacking. Midfield players swap passes and positions and before their opposition know it, they've created space for a teammate to burst into a threatening position. Often, however, children think only of moving the ball directly towards the goal; they don't necessarily understand how to create space in other areas of the pitch in order to eventually set up a scoring opportunity. Using wide areas of the pitch will help them understand this.

Activity 9: Attacking, defending and intercepting

Teams: Two teams of four

Equipment: One ball, two goal posts

Aim: Just as in an ordinary game of football, pupils work together to score and defend. However, the key focus is on *how* they do this, rather than how many goals are scored.

Rules:

- The pitch is split into three zones, spread vertically down the pitch – two wing zones and a central scoring zone – with a goal at either end. Two players from each team play in the scoring zone, one from each team play in each wing zone.

- Teams score three points for each goal, one point if a central zone player passes to someone in the wing zone, and five points for scoring after an assist from a player in the wing zone.
- Play as a class tournament. Have each group choose a Euro 2016 team to represent and no matter the number of goals achieved, score each game as follows:
 - Win = five points
 - Draw = two points
 - Lose = one point
 - Plus two bonus points for improving on own score from previous game.

Teaching points:

- When working out their strategies, children will need to consider their passing, receiving and intercepting techniques, how to move into space when attacking, and how to close down space when defending. A good attack has depth as well as width.
- Get children to consider where they need to be to receive a ball and also how to take a defender away from a teammate so that the teammate can receive the ball in space. They will need to remain aware of where their teammates are when deciding where to move to.
- At the end of each round of games, log points on the group table and then get each group to evaluate their performance. Set up a ten minute routine for pupils to practise what they think they need to before the next game.

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1. Ofsted. (2014). The PE and sport premium for primary schools. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools [Accessed 8 June 2015].
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4. Burns, J. (2014) Extra PE cash is having positive effect, say ministers. BBC News, [online] 8 September. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-29112988 [Accessed 8 June 2015].
5. Ofsted. (2014) Going the extra mile: Excellence in competitive school sport. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/going-the-extra-mile-excellence-in-competitive-school-sport [Accessed 8 June 2015].
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Knowledge trails

1. **Project plan: The Olympics** – A themed project plan embracing the Olympics from its every angle for use at Key Stages 2 and 3, presenting an ongoing opportunity to celebrate the event with a series of thinking skills activities and resources.
library.teachingtimes.com/articles/ct132p65p78projectplanolympics.htm