

# MANAGING FOOTBALL

## PART ONE

*Sneak Preview*

A close-up, low-angle shot of a soccer ball hitting a goal net. The ball is white with black panels and is positioned on the right side of the frame, just as it has struck the net. The net is made of white mesh and is stretched across the frame from the bottom left towards the top right. The background is a deep blue gradient, with a bright, starburst light source in the upper right corner, creating a dramatic, high-contrast scene.

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# Introduction

Navigating the complexities of modern football association management is nothing short of a challenging existential journey. Given the global significance of football as a cultural force which unites individuals from all corners of the world, effective leadership of a football association is vital. From mastering the minutiae of the ever-evolving global transfer market to confronting ethical dilemmas and social justice concerns, running a football association requires ensuring that sound business acumen intersects with an understanding of football as a cultural phenomenon.

Leadership of a football association requires a deep appreciation of the challenges facing the sport and its social significance. The book delves into the mandates and responsibilities of modern football association governance, offering a comprehensive guide for anyone looking to lead a football association. The book recognises that a football association's purpose extends beyond simply managing teams and organising tournaments; the association also has a social role to play, including youth development and community engagement to build support for the game.

The book offers several essential insights on sound leadership for aspiring football association administrators. Drawing on the wisdom of the likes of Aristotle and Peter Drucker, the book offers a comprehensive overview of strategic planning and decision-making, emphasising the importance of effective decision-making and a comprehensive ethical approach to governance. The book presents ethics and integrity as the cornerstone of any football association governance structure, arguing that officials must maintain high standards of accountability and transparency in their conduct while acting with integrity. Leaders are encouraged to govern in accordance with a set of clearly defined ethical and moral standards.

This essential guide offers insight and knowledge for effective management of a football association today. Armed with the sort of knowledge that this book provides, anyone can start a journey to leading a football association successfully.

In the words of Carmelo Soto, "History can teach its lesson only if it is remembered".

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## 1. WHY DO WE NEED A FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION?

### *Why Do We Play, What are the Core Values of Sport?*

In order to make a meaningful impact on the growth and development of football, it is essential to comprehend the underlying motivations that drive people's engagement in sports.

Exercise is necessary for reaching man's ultimate goal in life, which is to try to become a more complete human being, according to Greek philosopher Plato, who demonstrated a profound respect for the benefits it provided to people. Plato believed that physical education should help people become better thinkers and citizens. He believed that physical education, in addition to developing physical skills, also served to develop moral character and mental capacity. He asserted that cooperation, teamwork, and self-discipline were necessary values imparted by physical education. He thought that citizens would be better equipped to engage in the democratic process if they were well educated and physically healthy. His philosophy on physical education remains prevalent today.

In Plato's *Republic*, physical education was seen as an important part of the education of the youth, in particular. It would be seen as a means to develop critical thinking skills in the youth and to touch the soul, which helps to develop a sense of appreciation for the world around them. This, he felt, would contribute to the development of self-control and wisdom. This intersection of the mind and body in pursuit of man's purpose was central to the education of another renowned Greek philosopher, Aristotle, a student of Plato. This view of physical education was unique at the time and it has had a significant impact on the way we view physical education and athletes today.

Aristotle explored this concept further in Book VIII and Book IX of his volume, *Nicomachean Ethics*. He outlined the various ways in which people relate to each other as friends. Aristotle thought that the most common form of friendship was based on utility. It was desirable for persons to associate with one another if each could find some satisfaction or benefit from the relationship. Hence, team sports such as football, which developed out of this form of friendship, is a scaled form of utilitarian friendship based on respect and love.

It is important to understand that the concept of friendship in ancient Greece was considerably broader than the one we use now, which view is confined to the people we hang out with in our free time. They believed that friendship included everyone we regularly interact with at home, at work, during our free time, and everyone we have other connections with, whether they be political or otherwise.

*Friendly relations with one's neighbours, and the marks by which friendships are defined, seem to have proceeded from a man's relations to himself. For men think a friend is one who wishes and does what is good, or seems so, for the sake of his friend, or one who wishes his friend to exist and live, for his sake; which mothers do to their children, and friends do who have come into conflict. And others think a friend is one who lives with and has the same tastes as another, or one who grieves and rejoices with his friend; and this too is found in mothers most of all. It is by some one of these characteristics that friendship too is defined.*

*Now each of these is true of the good man's relation to himself (and of all other men in so far as they think themselves good; excellence and the good man seem, as has been said, to be the measure of every class of things). For his opinions are harmonious, and he desires the same things with all his soul; and therefore he wishes for himself what is good and what seems so, and does it (for it is characteristic of the good man to exert himself for the good), and does so for his own sake (for he does it for the sake of the intellectual element in him, which is thought to be the man himself); and he wishes himself to live and be preserved, and especially the element by virtue of which he thinks. For existence is good to the good man, and each man wishes himself what is good, while no one chooses to possess the whole world if he has first to become someone else (for that matter, even now God possesses the good).<sup>1</sup>*

The value of play to human happiness and well-being has long been recognised as stemming from a desire for meaningful friendships. From the Incas to the Greeks to modern-day academics and the Chinese, who were the first society to play football during the Han dynasty from 206 B.C. to 220 A.D., everyone seems to agree that participating in sports is beneficial.

However, what is it about sport that is so unique? Play, and specifically sports, is crucial for the development of character, leadership, and decision-making skills. Sport encourages us to face our anxieties, overcome adversity, and become more resilient. Sport teaches us how to be more self-disciplined, sociable, and team-oriented. In short, participating in sports is essential for the development of a healthy individual.

According to Aristotle, a good sport is one that performs in a way that is both honourable and virtuous. To put it another way, being a good sport should be enjoyable for both the participant and the viewer. It should also be something that can be improved upon and done frequently. The decision to do sport therefore places enjoyment and personal growth as central. Participants' social skills will inevitably increase as a result of this activity, with teamwork playing a key role. Moreover, sport must be something that everyone can enjoy, regardless of his or her motivations for participating in it.

Therefore, it is the duty of sports administrators to understand their roles in this context and to make sure that every participant derives value from their participation. Sport serves a variety of purposes, but from the Platonic and Aristotelian viewpoints, the main one is to achieve excellence. Accordingly, the goal of sport is to enable participants to realise their greatest potential as individuals. Sport is a means to an end – the ultimate objective being to excel, not just to have fun or to win. This suggests that athletes ought to be the main emphasis of sports, not just the administrators.

In addition to Plato and Aristotle, another key thought leader who weighed in on this subject is contemporary Norwegian philosopher, Steffen Borge, who has written on football extensively. He reasons that we are attracted to football not because it has any intrinsic value, but because we thrive on the conflict of the competitive nature of the sport – what he calls the *agon aesthetic* of the sport. This is in contrast to the aesthetics of a dance

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<sup>1</sup> *Aristotle on Friendships*, Book VIII, ch. 4. Extracted from the *Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by John Barnes, Princeton 1984.

performance or an artwork, which are valued for their physical or visual beauty and which induce a disinterested gratification.

*For Kant, the word beautiful comes from a 'judgment of taste' performed in a situation of 'pure disinterested satisfaction.' The operative word here is disinterested, in its uncorrupted sense of 'having no vested interest'. (Gumbrecht 2006, 40)<sup>2</sup>*

As a matter of interest, there is disagreement with Borge's view that "to invest prestige in football matches is to pretend that it matters, thus making it matter".<sup>3</sup> The aspirational value of the sport, at least in the South African context, satisfies some deeper yearning for self-actualisation. If not in Europe, then in South Africa, succeeding at sport assumes some deeper meaning in the context of centuries of oppression. It is true that it does not matter when compared to other life-sustaining requirements such as breathing, drinking water, or a functional heart. But "inner satisfaction" is vital to sustaining a player's intrinsic happiness.

Therefore, the success or failure of a sports organisation, its administration, its participants, and society at large depends on our understanding of why we play sport.

#### *So Why Do We Need a Football Association?*

Over many millennia, the game evolved across the world and saw many versions, be it Gaelic football, American football, rugby league, rugby union and many other versions with rules as diverse as the geographic locations in which it was played.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, games would sometimes start with a particular set of rules and end with a different set of rules in force. This century proved no different from previous centuries when the game's rules were not always clear. The confusion that resulted as the sport entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century, led to numerous attempts to establish a uniform set of rules. Even the English FA, formed on 26 October 1863, could not stabilise the game under one set of rules, playing a secondary role to rugby football for the first couple of decades of its existence.<sup>4</sup>

In their infinite wisdom, the founders of FIFA in 1904 chose stability and innovation as two of the cornerstones in its effort to control the game of association football as we know it today and to make it accessible to the masses. This stability was to be achieved through a rational-legalistic organisational method that articulated the terms of engagement very clearly.

The rational-legalistic method gave birth to the Laws of the Game, the FIFA Statutes and a host of other rules that ensured the game was played to a uniform set of rules. The rules, laws, and behaviours intended to promote efficiency and stable relations among the various stakeholders in the sport created the perfect competitive balance.<sup>5</sup>

As in other parts of the world, a governing body for football with established rules became imperative in South Africa. However, before delving into the intricacies of running a football

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<sup>2</sup> Steffen Borge (2015) An Agon Aesthetic of Football, Sport, Ethics and Philosophy, 9:2, 97-123, DOI [10.1080/17511321.2015.1061045](https://doi.org/10.1080/17511321.2015.1061045), p 101

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p 113

<sup>4</sup> Tony Collins, "How Football Began – A Global History of How the World's Football Codes Were Born"

<sup>5</sup> Excerpt from *Our Football is Broken*, Dennis Mumble, MFH Publishers, 2022, p. xvi

association, it is essential to first examine its historical context in South Africa to understand our current role better and avoid repeating any past errors in strategy.

It is also impossible to describe South African football's current situation without mentioning its colourful history. This history is deeply rooted in the turbulent social, political, and economic landscape from the 1860s to the present. The accumulated history of South African football has an influence on the association's current situation. However, throughout the 160 years since the sport was first recorded in the country, its growth among South Africa's diverse population, with its racially divided past, encountered various unique periods that corresponds with the political changes in the country.

Canon George Ogilvie introduced Gog's football, a cross between rugby and football, to Diocesan College in Cape Town around 1859. The oldest documented association football match in South Africa, however, took place in Gqeberha (formerly, Port Elizabeth) in 1862, when a 'home-born' team played against a 'colonial-born' team at the Grey Institute on 'the Hill'. According to news reports, the second recorded football match was played three months later in Cape Town on 23 August 1862<sup>6</sup>. This was 14 months before the formation of the English FA on 26 October 1863. On 26 September 1866, another match was recorded in the *Pietermaritzburg Panorama* and played in Pietermaritzburg. These games were, of course, played just for recreational purposes.

As narrated by Odendaal and Hill, in the decades that followed, soldiers and government officials played against each other, but soon these matches drew followers from varied segments of society, including the *amakholwa* – African men and women who professed the Christian faith and who believed in social equality with the colonial settlers – in Natal and among the petty bourgeoisie in the Cape Colony. The African bourgeoisie was hopeful that they could become part of elite society. This expectation arose after the 1853 Cape constitution extended a qualified franchise to all races.

*This dispensation was based on the prevailing hegemonic and mid-Victorian liberal ideology and the practicalities of free trade imperialism, which emphasised the virtues of free wage labour, secure individual property rights based on a free market, and a system of representation. 'It came to be regarded by Africans as a model system for the colonies, particularly as it contrasted starkly with the other South African colonies, both British and Afrikaner, where there was little pretense of social equality and blacks had virtually no political rights.'*<sup>7</sup>

There is no doubt that most of South Africa's most popular modern sports are the legacy of British imperialism, transplanted to South Africa, as it was throughout the British Empire, by imperial soldiers and civil servants. Odendaal writes that "[t]he development of sport in South Africa during the nineteenth century was closely linked to colonial politics and reflected in many ways in microcosm the developing South African colonial society and social structures".<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Paragraph summary of a paper written by Hill, Lloyd(2010) 'Football as code: the social diffusion of 'soccer' in South Africa', *Soccer & Society*, 11:1, 12 — 28

<sup>7</sup> Odendaal, Andre, in Mangan, J A, ed. - *Profit, Pleasure and Proselytism: British culture and sport at home and abroad 1750-1914* (Routledge: London), 1988

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, page 14

As Hill explains, the displacement of indigenous sports in the British Empire by the British sporting codes functioned as new forms of cultural capital. This cultural transplantation accelerated during the 1880s and 1890s during the mass proletarianisation of the country's agrarian majority when discriminatory tax policies forced the hitherto non-tax-paying African community to seek employment in the newly discovered gold mines in Johannesburg and the diamond mines in Kimberly to pay these taxes.

Following the abolition of slavery in South Africa in 1834, the colonial masters devised various other schemes to keep the Black population enslaved. The Masters and Servants Acts of 1856 formed part of a body of legislation developed to ensure the continued subjugation of Black people in the four territories that eventually united to form the Union of South Africa in 1910. The Act "*made it a criminal offence to breach the contract of employment. Desertion, insolence, drunkenness, negligence and strikes were also criminal offences. Theoretically these laws applied to all races, but the courts held that the laws were applicable only to unskilled work, which was performed mostly by Black people (Dugard 1978: 85; Horrell 1978: 6).*"<sup>9</sup>

The developments in the 1880s, was a harbinger of what was to come in the form of the apartheid system when English, Australian, and American artisans, imported for their specialist mining skills, started justifying the pay disparities as indicative of their racial superiority. What followed over the next three decades was the promulgation of a series of racially discriminatory workplace laws that prevented Black miners from access to professions in the mines. Black miners were refused blasting certificates in 1902 and 1904, followed by the Mines and Works Act No. 12 of 1911, among other oppressive legislation.

Dissatisfaction soon grew more intense among the aspirant *amakholwa* who had spent a great deal of time learning and excelling at cricket and rugby but bore the brunt of the growing racial animus after the antagonists in the Anglo-Boer War formed a united racial alliance against African advancement in industry and society.

Even though the *amakholwa* enthusiastically adopted colonial sports, and were relatively well-educated and aspiring to the same social status as the colonists, African professionals were soon disappointed by this racial alliance after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 when British-sponsored racially discriminatory rules were rolled out to maintain a steady supply of cheap labour for mining capital. So, a slow movement away from cricket and rugby emerged.

After 1910, the majority of Africans had come to favour association football and boxing, whereas the British colonisers preferred rugby and cricket. As a result, Black South Africans became increasingly isolated from the trappings of colonial elite life on a social and athletic level, putting a stop to aspirations of assimilation. The British and Afrikaner communities were also becoming more integrated at this time, at least in terms of sports.

The occasional white paternalism, according to Odendaal, allowed for some ongoing participation in rugby and cricket in the Cape, but football replaced both sports as the sport of choice for Black people in the Natal Province.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [Apartheid Legislation 1850s-1970s | South African History Online \(sahistory.org.za\)](http://sahistory.org.za)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



The purpose of this section is not to relate the full history of South African football – because there are many other factors that contributed to this state of affairs – but to provide context for the reasons Black South Africans adopted football (and boxing) as their sport of choice. The early 20th century's racial practices directly contributed to the overwhelming majority of Black South Africans choosing football as their preferred sport. Thus, South Africa's racial history had a significant influence on the current state of the sport.

Of course, racial discrimination was not the only reason for the popularity of football among Black South Africans. There is a more fundamental reason why people continued to adopt the 'beautiful' game; something that transcends race, culture, religion, or ethnicity. For an African, involvement in the sport is anchored in the spirit of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is a concept from the Bantu<sup>11</sup> language group of southern Africa, which has been translated as "humanity" or "humanness". In a philosophical context, it refers to the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity. It is the idea that we are all connected and that our well-being is dependent on the well-being of others, a concept similar to Aristotle's definition of friendship.

The practice of Ubuntu emphasises the interconnectedness and interdependence of all people, and emphasises the importance of community and collective responsibility. It promotes the idea that we are all responsible for each other and that we should act in ways that benefit the community as a whole. This includes showing compassion, generosity, and kindness towards others, and being willing to help those in need.

Ubuntu also emphasises the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness. It encourages individuals to let go of anger, resentment and bitterness and to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with those who have wronged them. This is seen as vital for the healing and restoration of relationships and the community as a whole.

In the practice of Ubuntu, the emphasis is placed on the importance of treating others with dignity and respect, and promoting a culture of mutual understanding and cooperation. It is also believed that Ubuntu can help to create a society that is more just, fair, and equitable.

In the football context, the practice of Ubuntu can be applied through promoting teamwork, fair play, mutual respect, and the inclusion of all members of the community in the game regardless of their race, gender, religion or socio-economic status.

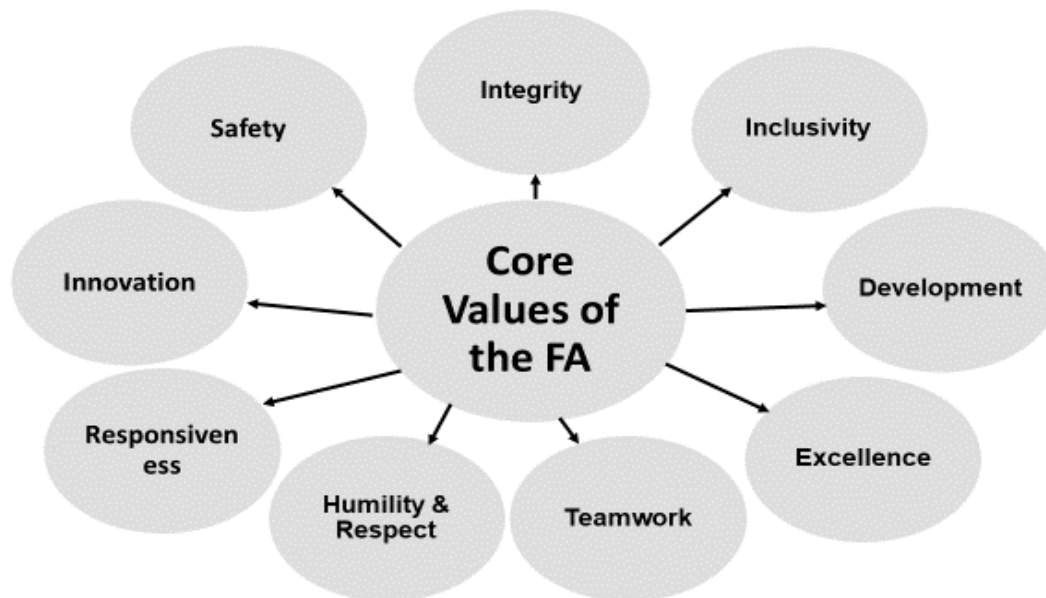
In short, Ubuntu is a holistic approach that emphasises the interconnectedness of all people and the importance of community and collective responsibility in promoting the well-being of all members. It is a practice that encourages individuals to be compassionate, to act with kindness, and to work towards creating a more just and equitable society.

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<sup>11</sup> Editorial Note: The term "Bantu" is used in the context of its linguistic origins and not to denote its derogatory meaning during the apartheid years, where it was endowed with the same connotations as the "n"-word used in the Americas.

## *The Core Values of a Football Association*

A football association, like any other organisation, should be guided by a set of core values that shape its decision-making, actions, and interactions with stakeholders. These values should reflect the association's mission and goals, and serve as a compass for all its stakeholders.



*Figure 1 - The Core Values of the Football Association*

The first core value of the association should be integrity. This value encompasses honesty, fairness, and transparency in all aspects of the association's operations. A football association with integrity ensures that the game is played according to the rules, that the administration and management of the game is fair, and that the association is transparent and accountable to its stakeholders, chiefly its membership. This value also means that the association should have zero tolerance for corruption, match fixing, or any other forms of unethical behaviour.

The second core value of the association should be inclusivity. This value promotes the participation and representation of all members of society, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or socio-economic status. A football association that values inclusivity creates opportunities for everyone to get involved in the game, whether as players, coaches, referees, or administrators. This value also means that the association should actively work to eliminate discrimination and bias in all aspects of its operations.

The third core value should be development. This value encompasses the association's commitment to fostering the growth and improvement of players, coaches, referees, and administrators at all levels of the game. A football association that values development invests in programmes and initiatives that help its members to improve their skills, knowledge, and understanding of the game. This value also means that the association should work to promote the game in under-served communities and encourage the development of new talent. The fourth core value should be excellence. This value promotes

the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of the game, from the quality of the playing surface to the level of coaching and refereeing. A football association that values excellence strives to create the best possible experience for players, coaches, referees, and supporters. This value also means that the association should constantly look for ways to improve the game and that it should be committed to achieving the highest standards possible.

The fifth core value should be teamwork. This value promotes the importance of working together to achieve shared goals, and creating an environment where everyone is encouraged to contribute their ideas, skills and experience. A football association that values teamwork fosters collaboration and communication among its members, and ensures that everyone is working towards the same objectives.

A sixth value is respect and humility. These values promote treating all members, players, coaches, referees, and supporters with dignity and respect. A football association that values respect and humility creates a culture of mutual respect, where everyone is valued for their contributions and opinions. This value also means that the association should be committed to promoting fair play and sportsmanship, both on and off the field.

Responsiveness is the seventh core value and encompasses the association's commitment to being responsive to the needs and concerns of its members, players, coaches, referees, and supporters. A football association that values responsiveness is proactive in addressing issues and concerns and is always looking for ways to improve the game.

Innovation is an eighth core value that signifies the association's commitment to being creative and innovative in its approach to the game. A football association that values innovation is open to new ideas and is always looking for ways to improve the game and create novel ways to development the game.

Ubuntu is the ninth core value that must be consciously promoted at all times. This value promotes the association's commitment to working closely with others to promote the game and create opportunities for all stakeholders to get involved. A football association that values community actively engages with local groups, schools and organisations to promote the game and create opportunities for participation.

A tenth core value that may be adopted is safety. This value promotes the association's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of all members, players, coaches, referees, and supporters. A football association that values safety creates a safe environment, and has systems and processes in place to mitigate risks and ensure the safety of all participants. It also has a duty to comply with related legislation that seeks to protect minors participating in the sport. For example, the underpinnings for child protection measures can be found in **sections 28(1)(d) to (g) of the South African Constitution**. The Children's Act 38 of 2005 gives effect to the provisions of the Constitution.

These values, when they are incorporated into the association's laws, rules, and regulations, will ensure that the association remains guided by principles that advance the wellbeing of all members and promote the growth and development of the game when actively promoted by the association. The association will then be in a good position

to accomplish its goals and encourage the expansion of the sport at all levels. These principles will also guarantee that the association is well respected by its stakeholders and society in general and that it can adapt to the evolving demands of the game.

### *The Role of the Football Association*

The football association is an affiliate of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the Confederation of African Football (CAF), and the Council for Council of Southern Africa Football Associations (COSAFA) and is responsible for governing and promoting the sport in the country. By virtue of this, the association accepts to collaborate with other associations to grow and develop the sport worldwide by setting an example through its own conduct.

Among its varied responsibilities is to govern through rules and regulations, organising competitions, and developing and managing the various national teams, the activities of its members, leagues, clubs, players, coaches, administrators, and referees within its jurisdiction. Strategically, it must also develop the sport at the grassroots level, through youth leagues, coaching, and refereeing programmes. The association has a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the sport by enforcing its rules and regulations related to fair play in all areas of its activity and promote ethical conduct, in particular the prevention of match fixing and other forms of corruption.

Altogether, the association must deliver on these responsibilities safely and securely so as to maximise the enjoyment of all stakeholders in the sport and setting standards commensurate with the expectations of everyone.

**\*\* END OF SNEAK PREVIEW \*\***