

Rugby: values and principles

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Abstract: In rugby, individual competitiveness and the virtuosity of the individual give way to the rise of the group, in which individual competitiveness first meet and then merge according to pre-established patterns, enhancing the contributions and skills of all individuals during the game. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to bring to light the many skills that can be spent in different life contexts that the discipline of rugby has to offer to anyone who approaches it in practice.

Keywords: Sport, Rugby, Education

Riassunto: Nel rugby, l'agonismo individuale ed il virtuosismo del singolo lasciano il posto all'ascesa del gruppo, nel quale le competitività individuali prima si incontrano e poi si fondono secondo schemi prestabiliti, valorizzando i contributi e le capacità di tutti gli individui nel corso del gioco. Lo scopo del presente paper è quello di portare alla luce le molteplici competenze spendibili in diversi contesti di vita che la disciplina del rugby ha da offrire a chiunque le si avvicini nella pratica.

Parole Chiave: Sport, Rugby, Educazione

1. Introduction

Sport is usually relegated to the last pages of newspapers - far from "serious" topics such as politics and economics - often in association with words such as pleasure, leisure, leisure. It's defined as an exercise practiced especially in the open air for pleasure or for performance. In the case of rugby, which is a sport of English origin, but widespread in many parts of the world, developed an image first as amateur sport practiced by the English middle class, then gradually passed from a minor and provincial sport to mass discipline taking root in Italy, despite many stereotypes shared with fascism. Initially opposed by the fascist regime because of Anglo-Saxon origin, it found a prominent position thanks to those qualities that made it a sport suitable for young people: based on team play, on camaraderie, useful for the physical growth of boys and able to teach the values of combat and loyalty, became one of the most beloved sports and practiced by the fascist youth of the 1930s; with the fall of the regime, rugby had to pay pledge because it was considered for many years a violent sport and linked to the double thread of Mussolini ideology. Only a few years ago, media attention was imposed, especially by the comments of newspapers and television, and also by the football crisis in which scandals and corruption overshadowed its values. The main sponsors were quick to enhance this sport where honesty, transparency, loyalty and collaboration helped to enhance it and make it

known especially among young people contributing to a vast movement that seems to no longer want to stop. Today, the representations that are given to Italian rugby show it as a sport in strong ascent with correct players and endowed with an extremely developed ethical sense and emphasize the principles of the organization, of the union, tenacity and strength often highlighted by comparisons with the corrupt world of football and the unfairness and indiscipline of the players who practice it (Araújo, Mesquita, Hastie, 2014). This confirms that rugby is a discipline that meets both the reality of the facts and the expectations and interests of young people and it is good to know that in many foreign countries (New Zealand, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, etc.) Playing rugby is one point in favor of a candidate for employment. Sport is often used as a metaphor for life and motor and sports activities promote the correct physiological, emotional, cognitive and socio-social development the relationship of the person promoting the acquisition of proper lifestyles and healthy competition in respect of the companion. In particular, rugby is a sport that to everyone seems strange, paradoxical and philosophical at the same time since players can go forward... passing the ball only backwards. This rule of the game has many ways of being interpreted. An initial interpretation could be that the goals of the rugby players (the goal line) can be achieved only by looking back and drawing on our roots and also a predisposition to humility, as to say "Go ahead, but remember to turn back not to seem arrogant". In rugby, as in life, one runs towards a goal and all life tends to a goal (Cuevas, García-López, Serra-Olivares, 2016). This quest is certainly tiring, requires struggle and commitment, but the most important thing is not to run alone. The attention paid to a sport that at the same time is friendship, culture, collaboration, entertainment makes that rugby is an opportunity for all being a sport that is easily learned and as such is easily practicable. Undoubtedly, rugby improves the development of both coordination and conditional abilities because it is based on physical contact, but, at the same time, it presents fundamental values, including respect for the rules and the opponent: using sayings borrowed from rugby, "going to the goal" means reaching a goal not without overcoming some difficulty and "throwing yourself into the fray" means being part of a group without hesitation. It's not 15 players fighting with 15 other players in uniform to compete for an oval ball to the sound of shoulders and tackles, but it's much more than just a sporting activity: it's, above all, a philosophy of life that includes respect, loyalty, esteem and trust but without violence... True, there is a lot of physical confrontation, but never violence! We ran towards the goal as well as in life because our whole life tends

towards a goal, as Pope Francis commented a few years ago receiving in audience the leaders of the Italian rugby national team. This quest is tiring, requires struggle and commitment but it is important never to run alone: the ball is passed from hand to hand advancing together and when you get to the goal you celebrate. In rugby there are no former rugby players: those who have played rugby are rugby players for life and not by chance in English they do not say "rugby player" (ie rugby player) but "rugby man" to emphasize, with force, that there is no individual without the group: it is a sport that teaches to stay in the world, where the team spirit is enhanced, aware that the games are won and lost all together (Dumith, Gigante, Domingues, 2011). In rugby there are no simulations of foul or injury as it happens in football, where even famous professionals drop every time they do not have an advantage they cannot catch the ball, but as in other sports happen misconduct: The difference is that you defend yourself properly and you do not simulate... Simulating is a loser! Who simulates loses twice: a first time because it is pointed as a simulator creating bad relationships with teammates, opponents, coaches and referees; a second time because he acts like a loser and develops a mentality of loser (Hagger, Chatzisarantis, Barkoukis, 2005). In fact, those who simulate are doing nothing but communicating to their unconscious not to be strong enough to excel honestly and must use subterfuge to gain an advantage thus destroying one's winning mentality and decreasing one's self-esteem and growth capacity. The simulation is also a loser for the show because, continuing not to sanction the simulation, many young people will start to think that it is part of the game. In all sports, however, we must convince athletes that instead of simulating it is more appropriate and wiser to try to overcome the opponent with their athletic, physical and intellectual abilities (Nicholls, 1984). The simulation is a loser for the sport because it does not accustom to the rules and when these are violated they must be severely punished: the simulator is like a thief who steals. Rugby, more than any other sport, has an exceptionally rich heritage of values and is probably the only sport in which traces of the Olympic spirit of ancient Greece can be found (not that of the current modern Olympics). It is a sport that draws from its roots and its culture the drive to improve and find. Nobility, loyalty, sense of responsibility, respect for the opponent, spirit of sacrifice, disinterest, altruism, friendship, commitments, team play, determination, courage: these and other values are in the genetic code of rugby, involving players, managers, technicians and fans. It is a strong response to the crisis of values inside and outside sport because they are values that are transferred from rugby to life.

This sport provides an answer to the crisis of values that reigns supreme in our society (Perlman, Goc Karp, 2010). Every rugby match is like a battle of hard and decisive blows with a winner and a winner. Every warrior-player would never leave the field without giving his best. At the end of this battle-game, however, whoever wins is a friend of the loser and there is a moment that no other sport can make live: the "third time", a moment full of integrations that unites the teammates together with opponents. Therefore, rugby is played to get the victory on the field but not at all costs because if in other sports ethical concepts are rare, in rugby respect opponents, referees or all participants and reject cheating, racism, violence and drugs is the rule, not the exception. In the game of rugby there is a deep-rooted conviction that it is solidarity and progress is guaranteed by the prompt support of teammates (Smither, Zhu, 2011). Individual competition gives way to the good of the group, where the determination of the individual merges with that of others, all at the service of the good of the team (Ntoumanis, Standage, 2009). This formative aspect aspires to that aim that is at the heart of healthy communities educated in socialization, cohesion and democratic respect for others and rules. Rugby, therefore, plays an educational and formative role for young people in the search for suitable reference models (Spittle, Byrne, 2009).

2. The elements of the game of rugby

It is, therefore, clear that it is necessary to insist on educational proposals of this kind and that take into account the importance of motor-activity in order to raise public awareness of a subject so important for the many benefits it brings in the bio-psycho-social sphere of individuals as well as in the learning processes especially in the first age groups (Méndez-Giménez, Fernández-Río, Méndez-Alonso, 2015). Unfortunately, however, there are still many obstacles that are encountered in the implementation of the movement as a tool to convey transversal skills: they, in fact, do not only concern human resources (perhaps the easiest to act on through training interventions) but also and especially the environmental ones (Deci, Ryan, 1985). Surely a well-planned and structured teaching will always be able to overcome any kind of barrier because its strength will lie in the great ability to adapt to situations that may arise (Sinelnikov, Hastie, Prusak, 2007) but, on the other hand, it is true that part of the quality of the activities organized will depend on the adequacy of the collection place. This is why, in the event of the absence or inability of the structures specifically used, It will be of great importance to conclude

partnerships so that the bodies holding the most appropriate structures offer the possibility to carry out activities even to those who do not have them. Having said this, in order to be able to carry out an optimal rugby session, it would be appropriate to take into account its fundamental elements that can be summarized as follows:

1) *The field:*

The main lines delimiting the game environment are five: a line of half a field, two lines of half and two lines of twenty-two meters.

Inside the playing field, the two doors are positioned: the latter have an "H" shape and are composed of two poles between 6.4 meters and 7.5 meters high with a cross 5.6 meters long and placed at 3 meters high. The base of the poles is padded to avoid injuries to players.

2) *The ball:*

The peculiarity of the ball used in rugby lies in its shape that is not spherical but is oval and this allows players to more easily hold the ball under the arm while running towards the goal.

3) *The techniques:*

Given the complexity of the discipline, the basic techniques of rugby are not easily classified but, in general, it is customary to distinguish two types of traditional plays:

- tackles, to stop a player with the ball by dropping it on the ground without touching it from the neck;
- fouls, when the rules are violated and, therefore, the team can use four different choices (kick between the posts, kick in touche, make an orderly melee or share with an action in hand).

4) *The playing times:*

A rugby match lasts a total of 80 minutes and is divided into two times of 40 minutes with an interval of 10-15 minutes, after which the teams (composed of 15 players each), invert the positions on the field. At each break in the game, the referee tells the fourth man to count the time lost to calculate the recovery at the end of each of the two times. Recoveries of 5 minutes or more are not uncommon, necessitated by the many planned changes (up to 7). The game does not end at the end of the time regulation or recovery but when the action in progress ends due to interruption of play (forward, exit of the ball from the touche etc.): a penalty foul, which can be placed or played in the hand or turned into a closed scrum, is not considered a break, because the principle is always not to favor

obstructionism and disloyalty.

5) *The "third half"*:

A rugby match is, therefore, composed of two halves but a relevant importance is certainly a predominant characteristic of what is called "third half" that begins when the referee whistles the end of the game and is made of handshakes, friendliness and conviviality between those who a few moments before if he beat the hell out of her.

From this moment on, then, players stop being rivals to celebrate together, creating that community of intent that is the true basic spirit of rugby (Siedentop, 1994).

In this regard, more and more common custom is to provide a banquet offered by the host team meeting, in an atmosphere that makes forget the tension of the game, which is also attended by fans of both teams with the aim of eliminating the distances present during the match in the stands: therefore, athletes and spectators participate in the party together, united by the same spirit of rugby, to date, it is the only sport in which there is a social moment of this caliber despite some attempts (albeit in a very rudimentary) to emulate this tradition by other sports contexts.

3. A standard session of the game of rugby

The type of structured session must necessarily provide a certain degree of variability if you want to pursue educational purposes: in this regard, the proposals addressed to those involved in the activities must therefore be focused on the discovery of their own body and their psychomotor life without being rigidly linked to the real "sports" practice and the multitude of training models that make up the practice of Rugby (open-skill, closed-skill, proprioceptive training, training of the ability to react to stimuli, interaction with others). The lessons must be designed with well-defined structural lines, dividing the different types of work into specific moments with the aim of helping the subjects to recognize and familiarize more easily with the different work systems, thus avoiding creating a chaotic or excessively misleading context, in order to minimize the risk of adversely affecting the attention and interest of participants.

The first phase of the session of the game of rugby must always provide for a warm-up, preferably group, consisting of mobility exercises that recall the basic motor schemes and technical gestures specific to the discipline: initially the instructions will be provided exclusively by the teacher and the pupils will only perform them but, meeting after meeting, It will be important to ask the participants themselves to alternately play the role

of group leader by performing the exercises themselves and making sure that the companions do the same. The second phase of the lesson will be linked to the learning of the specific techniques of the game of rugby: it will be important that some proposals involve the performance of the techniques in solo mode, maintaining a correct shape of the body segments and significantly stimulating proprioception, while others will have to stimulate the execution of techniques together with a companion or in small groups so as to focus so on other types of stimulation. After the purely technical part, the lesson could continue by structuring a motor path consisting of exercises recalling the refinement of the basic motor schemes and the development of coordinating skills; Once they are familiar with the various exercises, they may be asked to create activities themselves or to perform freely chosen exercises on predetermined obstacles in order to express ideas, knowledge and skills. The last part of the session, purely of a recreational nature, could certainly concern the holding of a small meeting (delimited by a set time or by the achievement of a certain score), dividing the participating group into two teams. Of vital importance is certainly the fact that, both at the beginning of the lesson and before leaving the sporting environment, you must provide a time for the performance of the specific ritual agreed, or the "greeting" in a circle: it is a coded series of movements, to be performed in a joint group, which contributes to the strengthening of the sense of belonging and, therefore, to the understanding and internalization of the transversal value of the noble discipline of rugby.

4. The values and principles of rugby

The word sport is associated with various meanings, mainly playful or competitive but sometimes also economic. On the one hand everything is linked to the economy, on the other it is considered a tool of psycho-physical well-being. The roughening philosophy is increasingly used as a model for the study of social phenomena and used as a versatile metaphor in education and training. It is well known that the spirit that animates rugby is extraordinary: you win with modesty and you lose with lightness and the brain and the heart count more than the physical, where 14 players work together to give 15' half a meter of advantage and where the victory passes from the hands of a companion and where everyone (coaches, players, family and technicians) breathe a clean and healthy air without exasperation or degeneration, just the real and genuine sport. Rugby resists and continues to promote non-trivial topics and strong themes, often even against the current,

but for this reason it can affirm a form of healthy and genuine sport (Taylor, Ntoumanis, Standage, 2008). For those who do not know rugby it is difficult to understand the principles that govern it, to which everyone must scrupulously operate and observe, both players and coaches and referees. Having to behave correctly, self-control and discipline are a code of conduct that any protagonist must strictly observe. The great fascination of rugby lies, essentially, in the fact that it must be played according to the spirit and rules of the game, with a sense of discipline, self-control and mutual respect (Perlman, 2011). Being a physical sport, those who practice it develop the spirit of camaraderie and the sense of fair play that have remained unchanged over the years and time and in all levels of those who practice the sport. Rugby forms character and encourages team spirit, understanding, solidarity and respect for opponents and has as its main aspects the pleasure of participating, the courage and techniques of this game but above all the passion for team sport that almost always leads to build indestructible friendships. In recent years, despite having become a professional sport in the Anglo-Saxon countries, rugby has managed to preserve all its original traditions and is an example to follow especially in the era in which we live, where most sports activities are contaminated by doping and sold to the highest bidder (Cuevas, García-López, Serra-Olivares, 2016). Rugby is man's dominance over things because controlling an oval ball requires the same difficulties that you encounter in everyday life. This sport teaches, through its values, to grab the ball always remaining calm, lucid, succeeding with tenacity, dedication and humility to take it beyond that goal line so much desired as in the game of life. The goals of a rugby club are to grow men and not great champions. This growth must develop not only on the field but outside because once you are a rugby player you will always remain: both inside and outside the field. Important is the control and management of resources, how to tolerate pain and fatigue, so as to control efforts in order to achieve common goals. You learn rugby on the field and you teach it in life. Rugby is a spectacular and highly uplifting discipline and is without doubt the most democratic sport in existence: In fact, there is no preclusion for any type of physique and this is evident from the same composition of the teams, at any level: there is the low and scruffy player, suitable for the front line; there is the small and fast one, able to slip between the jerseys of the opposing defense; There's the tall, muscular one, good for the kicks.. In short, anyone can play rugby as long as they have the will and the ability to shed blood, sweat and tears. Very important is the process for the formation of a rugby player who must tend to form - says

the F.I.R. (Italian Federation Rugby) - "men and athletes" who can compete at the highest sports levels and are able to react positively under pressure in every situation of life (Tammelin, Näyhä, Hills, 2003). Above all, we look to the educational mission to ensure that those who approach this discipline are capable of having courage, dedication, integrity and availability and are able to maintain lucidity in the face of any pressure that social life imposes on each of them. The fundamental principles underlying a training course are indicated by the F.I.R. in:

- 1) a player-centred model and its components;
- 2) training as a long-term process;
- 3) integration between sport and training of men and athletes;

The F.I.R. while admitting that learning for young people cannot be standardized or it is possible to predetermine the time of evolution, gives a lot of importance to the training process with a progressive programming that divides the children into:

- first level players: beginners, aged 6 to 9;
- second level players: 10-11 years;
- third level players: 12 to 13 years;
- fourth level players: 15 to 17 years old.

5. Conclusions

In the light of the considerations made so far, there are many conclusions that can be made: surely the erroneous meaning attributed to rugby has a strong component of fear of getting hurt, because apparently it is a violent sport and not practicable by all. In fact, thanks to numerous other testimonies, it is possible to say that the truth is another that rugby is a sport that can be played by all and must be played without fear (Perlman, 2010). Anyone who has approached this world will also be full of bruises but has never encountered violence and has learned that, for example, after a tackle must accompany the opponent to the ground to prevent him hurt, that the ball must always pass to the partner, that you must respect any arbitral decision and that if you only try a protest you are kicked out. In rugby, as in life, nobody gives anything: if in difficulties you stop crying and hoping that things will settle themselves, you will live only with illusions. Rugby is a discipline that has only one commandment: look in the face with those who are close to us and be always ready to start again, Keep constantly training and have the desire to bring that oval ball to the goal knowing that on the other hand there will always be

someone or something that wants to take away that ball. Life is a game and rugby is a beautiful way to live it because it teaches that running does not mean running away but going to the future, facing difficulties. Rugby is the absolute order in the apparent disorder and the most beautiful victory of rugby will certainly be achieved when Italian mothers understand that this sport has so much to offer their children: values, discipline and endurance/overcoming suffering... this is a sport that trains to life!

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