



EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 MONDAY 26 APRIL

Sport cheats are bottom of the class in pupil poll

- *Two thirds of children not influenced by professional gamesmanship*
 - *Unfair play is rife in school playing fields*
 - *Tyson tops 'Spirit of Sport Hall of Shame'*

Professional sportsmen who break the rules are not "cool for school", while their young fans are not as impressionable as we might think, according to research published today by MCC and the Cricket Foundation.

The large majority of 1,000 children, aged eight to 16, polled describe a sportsperson who does something unfair in a game as a 'cheat' (72%) and 'stupid' (33%); with only 4 per cent thinking they are 'cool'.

Far from being easily influenced, two thirds of children (67%) deny that seeing a famous sportsperson doing something unfair in order to win would make them more likely to do it themselves.

However, the school playing field is still a hotbed of rule-breaking with more than half of children (54%) witnessing unfair play in every single game they play. Faking injuries, elbowing in the face, arguing with the umpire and head butting were among the many examples of gamesmanship cited by youngsters.

To help combat bad sportsmanship at grassroots level, MCC - guardian of the Laws and Spirit of Cricket - and the Cricket Foundation charity are continuing their joint nationwide scheme to encourage fair play in schools.

Launched last year, the initiative will bring lessons in 'fair play' to children in 4,000 state schools throughout the summer term. Respecting teammates, opponents and officials are among the areas covered in the MCC Spirit of Cricket session; an integral part of the

Cricket Foundation's *Chance to shine* campaign to educate children through cricket.

Encouragingly, in a like-for-like survey of two hundred eight to 11 year olds involved in the MCC Spirit of Cricket scheme, the number of children who witness unfair play in every game drops significantly to 37%. Equally, the number of children who say they 'hardly ever' or 'never' see unfair play (41%) is twice that of children who are not part of the fair play scheme (21%).

John Stephenson, Head of Cricket at MCC says: "Our partnership with the Cricket Foundation has proved that lessons on MCC Spirit of Cricket can and do have a positive effect on how children play sport.

"We passionately believe that sport should be played to win but not at all costs. *Chance to shine* coaches and teachers instil the message to play hard, play fair and have fun, which is something we feel can be of benefit to children of all ages and abilities, no matter what sport they take part in.

"MCC looks forward to enhancing the school sports experience for hundreds of thousands of children in schools across England and Wales this summer."

Wasim Khan, Chief Executive of the Cricket Foundation adds: "Fair play is something that should be taught at an early age. We feel that we're in an ideal position to help teach good sportsmanship through our *Chance to shine* programme and partnership with MCC.

"Independent research by Loughborough University found that cricket can help provide young people with key life skills such as how to win and to lose graciously. It's all part of our campaign to educate children through cricket."

Other highlights of the MCC/Cricket Foundation survey include:

- Fourteen is the age when bad sportsmanship is most common, with almost two thirds (63%) of teenagers of this age regularly seeing cheating in games
- Leeds is the place where children most see unfair play 'lots of times in a game' (27%), neighbouring Sheffield is the least (7%)

- Unfair play occurs overwhelmingly more in team sports (72%) than in individual sports (just 6%)
- Dads worry more about their offspring being impressionable: almost half (46%) confess to worrying about their kids copying an unsporting pro, compared to one in five (21%) of relaxed mums
- Half of parents admit that their children's bad behaviour on the playing field is their responsibility; followed by the coach's (28%).

Spirit of Sport Hall of Shame

Former boxing champion Mike Tyson's notorious bite on Evander Holyfield's ear in their 1997 heavyweight title match is voted the worst act of bad sportsmanship. Tyson receives a quarter (26%) of parents' votes.

Thierry Henry's double handball against the Republic of Ireland in last year's World Cup qualifier earns him second spot in the 'Spirit of Sport Hall of Shame', surprisingly *ahead of* Diego Maradona's infamous "Hand of God" act, which is ranked third.

The list of worst sportsmanship moments is copied below and the full Spirit of Sport survey can be viewed in the media section of chancetoshine.org. Further information on MCC Spirit of Cricket is available at lords.org/soc

- Ends -

For more information please contact:

The Cricket Foundation

Fabian Devlin, Head of Communications T. 07920 502 152
E. fabian.devlin.cricketfoundation@ecb.co.uk

MCC

Neil Priscott, Media Manager T. 020 7616 8523/07876 746038
E. Neil.Priscott@mcc.org.uk

Notes to editor

- Tickbox.net/Opinion Matters questioned a representative sample of 1,015 children aged 8-16 and 1,007 parents of children aged 8-16 between 23rd

March 2010 and 6th April 2010. The Cricket Foundation surveyed 200 children aged 8-11 involved in the MCC Spirit of Cricket scheme between 22nd and 31st March 2010.

- **About Cricket Foundation/MCC Spirit of Cricket partnership**

In 2010, around 400,000 children in just under 4,000 *Chance to shine* schools will be introduced to the key MCC Spirit of Cricket messages enshrined in the Laws of the game, as a result of the continuing partnership. There are three core elements to the partnership: communicating the MCC Spirit of Cricket message to children within schools, organising intra school competition and MCC Spirit of Cricket 'Super Camps'.

Chance to shine coaches will deliver the MCC Spirit of Cricket message as part of the core *Chance to shine* programme. MCC and the Cricket Foundation have produced a special MCC Spirit of Cricket DVD resource for schools that cover key aspects of the Spirit of Cricket, such as respect for the opponent, captain and umpire.

Each *Chance to shine* school will also be provided with an MCC Spirit of Cricket Trophy to support intra school competition. This allows children to put into practice what they have learnt in the classroom. Pupils' fair play will be recognised and rewarded at the school sessions.

Working through the County Cricket Boards, the Cricket Foundation and MCC will deliver 12 MCC Spirit of Cricket summer camps for children across five regions, the North, London, South West, Midlands and Wales. Four of the camps will be girls only and each of the camps will involve members of the World Cup-winning England women's cricket team.

- **'Spirit of Sport Hall of Shame': Worst Sportsmanship Moments**

1. **Mike Tyson** biting Evander Holyfield's ear in the third round of 1997 heavyweight title match
2. **Thierry Henry's** setting up France's goal with a double handball that sent them to 2010 World Cup at the expense of the Republic of Ireland
3. **Diego Maradona** punching the ball into England's net in 1986 World Cup quarter-final, since known as the "Hand of God" goal.
4. **Ben Johnson** testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs after breaking 100m world record during 1988 Seoul Olympics
5. **Tonya Harding's** ex-husband conspiring to attack skating competitor Nancy Kerrigan during the 1994 U.S. Figure Skating Championships
6. **The Spanish Paralympic basketball team** being stripped of their 2000 Paralympics gold medals after it was revealed they had no mental handicap
7. **Michael Schumacher** deliberately colliding with Damon Hill to ensure he could not win the race and therefore the Formula 1 championship in 1994

8. **Tom Williams** using a fake blood capsule to fabricate a wound so he could be substituted for a specialist goal-kicker in 2009 Harlequins v Leinster match
9. **Renault Formula 1 team** allegedly engineering a deliberate crash by Nelson Piquet Jr. during the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix, in order to gain an advantage for his Renault team-mate Fernando Alonso.
10. **Greg Chappell** instructing his brother Trevor to bowl underarm when New Zealand had to hit six runs off Australia's last ball to tie the 1981 ODI