

Mixing Sport with Politics and Ideologies is a Bad Idea

Shôn Ellerton, December 8, 2020

Mixing politics or ideologies like BLM with British football seems like the perfect recipe for stirring up a hornet's nest.



Have you ever, at any time, walked past a wooden fence of someone's backyard behind which, a vicious-sounding yapping little dog feverishly wants to get its teeth into you and you can't avoid the temptation to tease it by going close to the fence and tapping it just to see if the dog goes into total meltdown? I put my hands up and confess that I have done so on occasion. Well this is what happens when you mix politics and ideology with sport.

How about this? Earlier this week, during a football game in the UK, Millwall players decided to 'take the knee' in solidarity of the BLM movement. Being an only occasional sports watcher, I thought this was a passing fad in the height of fervour stemming from Floyd's death, but I was surprised to find out that 'taking the knee' is still in practice in the world of sports. Many Millwall fans booed when this happened sparking an outrage in the UK mainstream press. The Guardian, in one of its [articles](#), cites in its headline that cabinet minister George Eustice 'failed to condemn Millwall fans who booed players taking the knee'. 'Failed' An interesting choice of words inferring that he did wrong by taking no action.

Before I proceed further, I am planting the ideology of the BLM movement as being highly political. I do not associate with it because I do not know what this movement is really trying to achieve. Is it to identify with the injustices against black people? Or is it people of colour? What about those of darker skins living in equatorial latitudes? Or perhaps the more disadvantaged of us? Does that

include poor white people as well as people of colour? What about Asian and Indian people? What about successful people of colour? Are they pushing for Marxism? A change of state or anarchy? I *do* know that they believe in disrupting the nuclear family, words which were later removed from their official website to not scare off the more moderates of the movement. I also know that they are against the principles of equality as purported by Martin Luther King, but rather support the damaging ideology of critical race theory. I am in strong disagreement with anyone who tries to push this ideology onto those who are not familiar with it or those who disagree with it. Like any ideology for that matter.

For those who are not familiar with critical race theory should read Di Angelo's *White Fragility* or Ibram Kendi's *How to be an Anti-Racist*. I read *White Fragility* earlier this year including writing an [extensive critique on it](#) but as of time of writing, I have yet to read Kendi's book. It is important to understand what an *anti-racist* is in terms of critical race theory and I seriously believe that most who follow the BLM movement do not know what it means. Most of us, or certainly all the people I know, are not racist. Be warned though. This is *not* the same as being an anti-racist who must 'see' the person of colour and to behave accordingly when being in the company of or discussing people of colour. Being 'colour-blind', according to critical race theory, apparently, is a bad thing. As an aside, I wonder if a blind man can be an anti-racist?

BLM, being a political ideology, has made its way into places where it simply should not exist. For example, sports. Why must we mix politics and sports? Returning to the analogy earlier of teasing a small yapping dog behind a fence, this is precisely what they are doing. Many football clubs, along with many of their fans, in the UK have had or still have elements of true racism which is, not only a disgrace, but highly damaging to many of those afflicted.

But Millwall F.C.? I remember a great film back in 1995 called [I.D.](#) starring Reece Dinsdale which is based on the violent racist hooligans of Millwall F.C. Yes, it's very likely that there are going to be racist fans at Millwall but the club requesting the players to solemnly 'take the knee' in full view could be said as deliberately provoking the hornet's nest. If I was to put myself in the manager's shoes, and I want to promote equality by removing the barriers of race, colour and creed, surely there are better ways than requiring the players to perform an act of deference from an ideology of which, if one does not applaud or cheer to,

would be deemed a racist. If anything, the BLM movement has probably not helped with racial relations but rather made it more divisive.

Unfortunately, sports, politics and ideologies so often get intertwined leaving the pleasure of simply being able to watch a game or performance without any interruption from political or ideological statements almost impossible. This is often exacerbated by corporate sponsors who pay the big bucks to advertise during sporting matches; however, it is worth noting that it is not uncommon for political and ideological bodies to pay those companies in turn so that their message or statement can be conveyed. BLM is one of many ideologies that has captured the imagination of the sporting and corporate world making it more of a trademark and, in some cases, a cash cow. BLM, for many, has turned into a sort of religion because, like many of our, primarily monotheistic religions, there will always exist the fanatical base who proselytise them and deem anyone against them as being an outcast or worse. For example, I think offence would be taken by many if the players were requested to pray for Jesus or Allah in full sight of the crowd just before a match. Unless one lives in a dictatorial regime, I see absolutely no reason why *any* dissent or pushback amongst a crowd of fans should be punished when a political, ideological, or religious statement makes itself heard. When this occurs in a free society, punishing someone for expressing their thoughts or opinions is morally despicable.

I do not think it wrong to say that most of us are not racist in the traditional sense and I am certain that most of us do not need reminding that we should address the issue of racism through an ideology which, frankly, does not believe in true equality but rather, of equity, defined by the equality of *outcome*. The case of Millwall F.C. players taking the knee was, in my opinion, an act of defiance or deliberately rubbing the noses of the fans with an ideology which they are strongly encouraged to support or else be banished into the bin of racism. This form of virtue signalling is not unlike a form of bullying or issuing a statement with duress. Sport does not need to have ideologies and political statements being bandied about. In short, leave politics and ideology out of sports, please.