

When growing up you are encouraged to work hard and do your best. You are told that the harder you work, the better you'll do. It is a lesson that serves you well throughout life and 99.9% of us would not for one second contemplate doing anything illegal to enhance our success. The fear of being caught would deter most from writing answers on our sleeves to excel in an exam so why do a minority feel it is OK to defraud others from success by cheating in sport?

We have had a number of scandals in sport recently about corruption but the revelations this week about athletics is extraordinary. I heard one commentator say that cheating in athletics is not new and sadly that is true with historic cases of doping being well documented. However what is new are the allegations of cover ups at the very top so those who were caught doping were not suspended from events, therefore possibly robbing other athletes from medal success.

What message does this send to our aspiring sports stars? When I go to sports days across my constituency I see youngsters at the start line, concentration etched across their faces, ready to run their little sports socks off until they reach the finish line. These young boys and girls, with a bit of encouragement, could turn into future stars like our own local athlete Jack Green but what chance do they have when not only are they fighting their own physical and mental battles but the suspicion that they are not competing on a level playing field.

These latest revelations are being investigated now but when coming on the back of FIFA it is absolutely vital that we restore integrity in sport, not only to ensure justice for current athletes but to encourage our future stars to win but win clean.