



## July 2010 – To Win No Matter What?

In last week's elimination match for the FIFA World Cup of Football/Soccer between England and Germany the English team scored what was clearly a goal however, the referee and linesmen weren't in a position to see it cross the goal line and the German goalkeeper played the ball as if it hadn't gone in the net.

Later in an interview, the German goalkeeper acknowledged that he knew it was a goal however; he acted quickly to put the ball back in play in order to make the referee think it had not crossed the line. So in effect, he admitted he tried to fool the officials to the benefit of his team.

Was the German goalkeeper cheating? Being unethical? Being competitive? Focused to win?

One could argue that the "missed goal" was the fault of the referee or linesman. It is their responsibility to call the game, not the players.

One could argue that it is FIFA's fault for not having instant replay in the game. Clearly on the TV replay it was easy to see that the ball had crossed the goal line.

One could argue that it is professional sports' fault for placing such high demands on teams to win because of the large sums of money that are at stake.

Conversely, whether it's right or wrong, professional athletes are role models for millions of kids (and adults too in some cases). By this goalkeeper doing what he did – was he being a role model for winning no matter what, even if that means denying an opponent's goal or for doing whatever it takes to achieve the outcome you want regardless of the moral cost?

In deciding if it is right or wrong, ask yourself the following questions:

- Would I want my kid to have done it during one of his or her games? Would I want a child on the opposing team to have done it to my kid's team?
- What if our company hadn't paid a supplier's invoice and the supplier never called us on it? What if one of our customers hadn't paid us and customer service hadn't followed up?

When you're standing in the other person's shoes it doesn't feel so skilful or right, does it?

What if the German goalkeeper had stopped the play acknowledging it was a goal before the referee had even called it? How would the German fans have reacted? How would the coach have reacted? My guess, in the short term the German team, the fans and the coach would probably be upset or shocked. The English team and fans would have thought "of course it was a goal". In the long term, as most reasonable people would admit it was a goal, he could have

been held up as a professional athlete who played with the utmost sportsmanship, a positive role model to everyone watching.

Character and integrity are most proven when no one is watching – imagine what he could have displayed with the world watching?

I would love to hear your point of view on the playing to win.

**Live your potential!**

**Anne Taylor**

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