

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD OF SPORT

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the gift of sport, for the space to express our bodies, use our gifts and bring people together; For the joy of watching the supremely gifted in the backhand passing shot on Centre Court, the unstoppable volley at Wembley and the reverse sweep for six at Lord's; For the inclusivity of sport and the higher profile emerging for women and those living with disabilities. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We pray for your blessing on local sports clubs, park runs, swimming pools and gyms; for paid staff and volunteers; that they may be places that unite, and not divide; and where the spirit of competition is enfolded in mutual respect and dignity; may they be places of thankfulness where people reflect on the embodiment God has given them. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We lay before you sport's darker side:
Where there is ugly tribalism and nationalism that disfigures big games;
When players and spectators are abused for their identity or appearance or for sporting tragedies like Hillsborough, Munich and Ibrox;
Where defeats lead to domestic violence and hostile mood swings;
When sport is used to launder the image of abusive regimes.
May the gift of sport more truly reflect Jesus, the image of your glory, instead. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We thank you for sport's shared language and the stories that shape our humanity; Breathe through these by your Holy Spirit, that people may see the 'unknown god' in sport to be the risen Lord himself;
Shed your light on sport as it grows more important and gets more publicity;
And help us to understand how to live for you as we play it, watch it and talk about it. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**



Prayer composed by Bishop Simon Burton-Jones
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