

## HOW CAN FAIR PLAY AND TEAM SPIRIT GUARANTEE THE SUCCESS OF SOCCER CLUBS, STATES OR NATIONAL ECONOMIES?

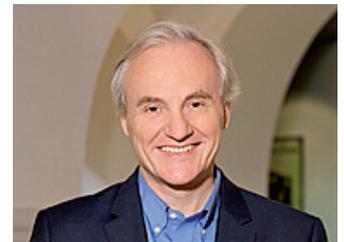
**What role do sports play in creating understanding between different peoples and cultures? Is adherence to the rules of a game conducive to compliance with social norms? Does the self-discipline required to play the game also have a positive influence on an individual's ability for self-regulation and, by extension, on social standards, international relations and welfare? These are some of the key issues and developments that will be studied under the new Professorship for Economics of Welfare and Sports at the University of Zurich. Its findings, gained through an interdisciplinary approach, will support domestic and international organizations from the entire political and economic spectrum in leveraging the productive potential of sports to increase social welfare.**

People of all ages and cultural backgrounds are united by sports. Soccer in particular – one of the most popular sports, loved and practiced all around the

world – is uniquely suited to have a positive influence on human behavior. Why is that? Because all participants are ready and willing to accept common rules and acknowledge the existence of their opponents. In a similar way, the customs, fairness standards and legal provisions of national economies become common knowledge, although this happens over the course of decades. So under which conditions would soccer be able to promote public welfare? And how can its negative aspects and excesses such as hooliganism be prevented?

### **Soccer as a school for life**

As a form of physical exercise, soccer can promote health and fitness, channel and release aggression, even mitigate drug abuse and violence. Team sports like soccer are based on interpersonal relationships and thus contribute significantly to the development of the players' personalities. Core values such as fairness, discipline and team spirit are imparted in a very casual atmosphere. From an early age, children and adolescents learn how to deal with



**Prof. Ernst Fehr**

Prof. Ernst Fehr is responsible for the new Professorship for Economics of Welfare and Sports. He is Chairman of the Department of Economics and Director of the University Research Priority Program on the Foundations of Human Social Behavior.

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The research work done under the new professorship will lead to insights into how self-motivation, self-regulation, and discipline can be transferred from the world of sports to other areas of life.

winning and losing, how to solve problems, and to adhere to rules. They realize the importance of self-motivation, self-regulation and discipline, and they become valuable members of society. Because team sports like soccer are so widespread and popular, they have also become an important pillar of the economy, and their role in imparting passion and enthusiasm even makes them psychologically relevant as individuals may find that they can mobilize strengths to overcome highly aggravating circumstances. Athletic activities also have a positive impact on a person's physical and mental abilities, which in turn leads to a more prosperous society.

### **Objectives and advantages of the new professorship**

The objective of the professorship is to further our understanding of the influence of soccer on society, exploring the game's impact on the development of values in children and adolescents and their self-regulation capabilities while determining its potential for promoting wealth and prosperity throughout society:

- Creating an understanding of what impact an individual's behavior on the soccer field will have on his or her appreciation of social norms.
- Assessing the influence of self-discipline and self-regulation methods acquired in training and on match days on the players' interactions within the team.
- Gaining insights into cooperation mechanisms, fair play and their impacts on social welfare and macroeconomic success.

The professorship will yield insights as to how characteristics from sports can be introduced into other areas of life. This research can support domestic and international organizations and policy-makers from the world of politics and economics and help them find the best methods to encourage and challenge young talents. The findings will also contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms of wealth and prosperity in our society in order to develop appropriate supporting measures.

### **World-class research at the University of Zurich**

The Department of Economics has attained international renown in a number of areas. Current research projects include the economic and

psychological fundamentals of fairness, values and norms, the study of cooperation mechanisms, self-regulation abilities, the influence of leadership and decision-making dynamics in team environments, the neural basis for economic behavior, but also the study of markets, organizations and economic stimuli. Understanding these phenomena is crucial in our day and age, characterized as it is by globalization and rapid technological and cultural changes.

### **Innovative research labs**

The internationally recognized Laboratory for Experimental and Behavioral Economics utilizes network computers to test subjects simultaneously in interactive settings, allowing the researchers to conduct comprehensive behavioral studies efficiently and under realistic conditions. This research lab is one of the principal reasons for the continued success of the University of Zurich's Department of Economics and it is of global importance for the further development and extension of Zurich as a research location. In addition, the Laboratory for Social and Neural Systems Research combines state-of-the-art imaging techniques, non-invasive brain stimulation, neuropharmacology and computer simulation to facilitate the study of biological and psychological mechanisms which inform economic decision-making processes.

### **Department of Economics, University of Zurich**

The Department of Economics at the University of Zurich is one of the leading research centers in Europe. The broad area of research includes various fields in economics, including econometrics, macroeconomics, microeconomics and neuroeconomics. Research is done with an interdisciplinary approach, combining modern economic theory with the newest elements from psychology, sociology, biology and neuroscience. Above and beyond this, the success of the Department of Economics is based on the dedicated research done by a large number of promising young scientists.

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### **Excellence Foundation Zurich**

The Excellence Foundation Zurich is an independent foundation established in accordance with Swiss law. Its objective is to allow economists and social scientists at the University of Zurich to conduct world-class research in order to find solutions to the most important current questions of our time. The foundation has the objective of establishing the best science for finding answers to important questions and problems.

The Excellence Foundation Zurich supports the Department of Economics in seeking new paths for cooperation with business and society. Serving as an interface between research and the economy, the Excellence Foundation Zurich brings the Department of Economics into contact with enterprises, foundations and individuals. As an innovative foundation, it offers various possibilities and tailor-made partnerships to its supporters.

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