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# Press Notice

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## **Olympic exhibition to chart history of sport and the law**

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom is teaming up with academics from De Montfort University (DMU) in Leicester and the British Association for Sport and Law (BASL) in preparation for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, together mounting a free exhibition that will put a spotlight on a side of sport that is rarely highlighted.

The exhibition, 'Playing by the Rules' – which will open to the public as part of an official programme of events inspired by the London 2012 Games – will chart the history of sport and the law, looking at issues such as ethics, anti-doping, commercialisation, branding and the role of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Staged in the former Middlesex Guildhall building, the exhibition will seek to highlight how the historic county has contributed to the world of sport. It will also profile some of the many Olympians – including ski jumper Eddie the Eagle, Sir Menzies Campbell and rower Lord Moynihan – who started their careers in the legal profession.

“The role of the law in sport tends to only make the headlines when things go wrong,” said Andy Gray, BASL Director and head of DMU’s Sports Law Unit.

“When an athlete fails a doping test, there is intense media interest and the impact of a ban from competing can have a significant impact on a person’s livelihood, so understandably, the lawyers are called in; when a football fan wearing a t-shirt - or an orange dress - promoting a rival product is broadcast on the big screen at a World Cup game, the official sponsors are straight on to their legal team.

“The legal and regulatory side of sport rarely captures the public’s imagination, but it plays a key role – and this exhibition aims to tell that story.”

**The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom**

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The exhibition will comprise informative panels, interactive displays and a selection of interesting artefacts, including memorabilia from the 1908 and 1948 London Olympics. Topics explored will include the issue of sportspeople consenting to be injured in the course of the sporting activity, and the lawfulness of stringent penalties designed to enforce anti-doping rules.

'Playing by the Rules' has also been granted the prestigious Inspire mark by the London 2012 Inspire programme, which recognises innovative and exceptional projects that are directly inspired by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Jenny Rowe, Chief Executive of the Supreme Court, said: "We hope that this project will open people's eyes to the close and complex relationship between sport and the law – and how the highest court in the land has occasionally engaged in sporting disputes of one form or another for many decades. In essence this is the story of how the British sense of fair play has been formalised in different ways over time to support the development of sport, from the grass roots to festivals such as the Olympics."

Mel Goldberg, BASL chairman, said: "The Association is delighted to be involved in such an important exhibition highlighting the evolution of sport and the law over the years, especially as many of our member firms and individual sports lawyers have been personally involved in so many of these cases. There is a very strong British link with the development of sports law."

Professor Tony Collins, director of DMU's International Centre for Sports History and Culture, and his colleague, senior research fellow Dr Jean Williams, are researching and writing much of the content for the exhibition.

"It's been fascinating, researching this subject for the exhibition," said Professor Collins.

Dr Jean Williams added: "Since the formation of the Football Association in 1863 and the creation of the 'Laws of the Game' sport has used legal terms both for its development and regulation. The Olympic Games, first held in 1896, are a really good example of how the role of law in sport has grown significantly and moved out of the hands of a few enthusiastic administrators to become a mega event. We aim to tell the story of how a small Victorian sporting festival developed a legal framework to become one of the world's largest cultural celebrations."

The project is a joint initiative between the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, DMU's Faculty of Business and Law, its International Centre for Sports History and Culture, and the British Association for Sport and Law.

The exhibition – which will take place at the Supreme Court in Parliament Square in London – will open to the public in July, a week before the Olympics get under way, and will be open to the public from 9.30am – 4.30pm on weekdays until the end of September. Admission will be free.

Organisations working in the area of sport and the law and interested in holding a reception or dinner around the exhibition are invited to contact the Supreme Court for details of available event packages.

**Ends**

**Notes to editors**

**About the Inspire programme:** The Inspire programme is run by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. It is an opportunity for everyone to be a part of the London 2012 Games – a broad participation programme spanning sport participation, education, sustainability, volunteering, and business opportunities & culture. New opportunities are being created to inspire young people and encourage the whole of the UK to join in. The Inspire programme has awarded over 1,400 different projects the Inspire mark.

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