

COMMITMENT - TEAMWORK - RESPECT

If ever we needed proof of respect, it was evidently shown by our national team players last week.

Their respect knew no bounds as they unconditionally committed themselves to two important encounters. The first match was versus a team coming from a superior footballing nation, whilst the second was played against a strong side which showed resolve and determination to beat our lads, nothing else would have been acceptable to them.

Although the results could have been slightly better, the Maltese public still expressed its respect towards the players who ran themselves to the ground and fought with impressive strength never surrendering an inch, except when muscles were stretched to their very limit. The grimace on the players' faces was testimony of their efforts and raw determination. Thanks for the emotion guys!

What we witnessed over the days before during and after these two matches was the respect shown by all. The players quite clearly wished to express their capabilities demonstrating the high standard achieved over these last years, pleasantly surprising a number of people in the process. The administrators, officials and staff left no stone unturned to support our representatives who in turn responded brilliantly. We are living an era of continuous development in our football which slowly but surely is gaining ground and if diligently managed is bound to give us further satisfaction. The road might be torturous and requires consistent focus.

The vital ingredient in all that we have admired, especially last week, is respect and teamwork without which success cannot be guaranteed. Our football requires a high dose of respect from all those inside and outside the game. Unless this is mutually expressed we cannot maintain the progress we have now become accustomed to expect.

In this sort of scenario we cannot but hope that our league matches are played in the same healthy and interesting atmosphere which our national team players have arduously presented. They have managed to inject respect at training, in the dressing room, on the pitch, off it, the stands and on the streets. The undoubted talents we witnessed will now be expected to trickle down into our day to day football redecorating the tarnished image of our competitions.

*Club administrators, players and referees must now be determined, more than ever before, to do their very best and cast off the shadows which have been hovering over us for some years. Damage has, unfortunately, been done and it is up to all stakeholders to pull together and show respect towards each other. Only when we manage to cut the hindering shackles, will we be able to climb up to the next level of quality and attraction, which we so much crave for, in our football leagues. **ft***