

Thomas's Study Passage

More Than a Game: What Sport and Judaism Have in Common - June 2026

One thing I love is sport, and over the years I have realised just how similar sport and Judaism really are. You might find this surprising, so let me explain.

Jewish life is centred around traditions, rules and values. So is sport. For example, many football teams have traditions such as singing a particular song before kick-off. In Judaism, it is traditional to celebrate after a bar or bat mitzvah. At Wimbledon, strawberries and cream are a famous tradition. Similarly, food plays an important role in many Jewish festivals and celebrations.

Another similarity is the importance of being part of a community. Sport brings people together through shared experiences, teamwork and friendships. In the same way, being part of a synagogue community creates a sense of belonging, support and connection.

I think one of the most important values shared by both religion and sport is respect. We should treat others with kindness and consideration, whether we are on or off the pitch. The Ten Commandments teach us to honour our parents, and the Torah teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In my opinion, respecting other people's views is essential. Even if we disagree with someone, we should still listen and try to understand their perspective. Sadly, this value is often overlooked, and we see conflict and division in many parts of the world today.

However, there are moments when people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds come together. Every four years, the FIFA World Cup unites millions of people through a shared love of football. It reminds us that, despite our differences, we are capable of coming together in harmony. If sport can do that, perhaps it can inspire us to do the same in everyday life.