

## Pass It On®...

### A Custom of Respect.

*How the Japanese soccer team brings sportsmanship to the game.*

Soccer is a passionate game. It's one of the few sports where players are free to follow the flow as they play, being less constrained by a game plan and more dependent on their ability to communicate and create opportunities.

It's also a worldwide sport, and fans are often just as impassioned as the players. At the World Cup, it is country against country. Emotions run high. National pride is on the line. And sportsmanship often gets lost amid the victors' celebration and the disappointment of the not-so-fortunate. The 2022 World Cup was no different.

The Japanese national team has often seemed like outsiders looking in, as the European and South American teams have dominated world soccer for decades. So when Japan stepped on the field in the first round against powerhouse Germany, there wasn't a lot of hope for the underdog.

Germany scored first on a penalty kick and fired several near-misses that would convince most fans that the Japanese just couldn't keep pace with the Germans. But they did. Heroic saves and a relentless attack saw the Japanese team knot the score at one goal apiece. Then, late in the match, a pinpoint pass from midfield set up a two-touch strike, and Japan took the lead. They hung on for a historic win that had the whole world cheering.

With such an improbable and gutsy win, you'd think there would be pandemonium in the stands and in the locker room. Certainly, there were celebrations. But when the cheering died down and the stands were nearly empty, the Japanese team was tidying up the locker room. They swept and mopped the floors, folded towels and left thank-you notes to the host country. In the stadium, Japanese fans stayed behind to collect garbage and clean up the stands. While the win was totally unexpected, the show of respect and gratitude was even more so.

In sports, as in life, wins come and go. Triumphs and tragedies will always be part of our journey. But as the Japanese soccer team demonstrated, no

matter the outcome, it is how we treat others that will be remembered most.

Respect...[PassItOn.com](http://PassItOn.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

*The Foundation for a Better Life® promotes positive values to live by and pass along to others.*

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