

Well said Gareth Southgate - and for blowing his knight...

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Gareth Southgate has won many plaudits [for the letter he has written to English football fans](#) in anticipation of the Euro 2020 finals. I offer another. I think these comments well worth sharing:

Why would you choose to insult somebody for something as ridiculous as the colour of their skin?

Why?

Unfortunately for those people that engage in that kind of behaviour, I have some bad news. You're on the losing side. It's clear to me that we are heading for a much more tolerant and understanding society, and I know our lads will be a big part of that.

It might not feel like it at times, but it's true. The awareness around inequality and the discussions on race have gone to a different level in the last 12 months alone.

I am confident that young kids of today will grow up baffled by old attitudes and ways of thinking.

For many of that younger generation, your notion of Englishness is quite different from my own. I understand that, too.

I understand that on this island, we have a desire to protect our values and traditions – as we should – but that shouldn't come at the expense of introspection and progress.

Regardless of your upbringing and politics, what is clear is that we are an incredible nation – relative to our size and population – that has contributed so much to the arts, science and sport.

We do have a special identity and that remains a powerful motivator.

In a funny way, I see the same Englishness represented by the fans who protested against the Super League. We are independent thinkers. We speak out on the issues

that matter to us and we are proud of that.

Of course, my players and I will be judged on winning matches. Only one team can win the Euros. We have never done it before and we are desperate to do it for the first time.

Believe me.

But, the reality is that the result is just a small part of it. When England play, there's much more at stake than that.

It's about how we conduct ourselves on and off the pitch, how we bring people together, how we inspire and unite, how we create memories that last beyond the 90 minutes. That last beyond the summer. That last forever.

I think about all the young kids who will be watching this summer, filling out their first wall charts. No matter what happens, I just hope that their parents, teachers and club managers will turn to them and say, "Look. That's the way to represent your country. That's what England is about. That is what's possible."

If we can do that, it will be a summer to be proud of.

There are three reasons for sharing that.

First, it is very rare for anyone to offer a view of what it is to be English, excepting those who use the term to bully or harangue others. So Southgate's open minded view is welcome.

Second his candour on racism is so very welcome.

Third, to note the implicit rebuttal of those in the government who use their positions to bully and harangue those opposed to racism.

We know not being a racist is not good enough now. We know that we have to be anti-racist. It's not left or right wing to be so. It's definitely not Marxist. It most certainly is Christian. But our government opposes anti-racism. Which makes it racist. Southgate is calling them out. Good for him I say.

He will deserve a knighthood after the Euros, whatever happens and however soon England lose. It will be for services to the community. I think we can be sure he will not get it.