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The Role of Ethics in Athletic Participation

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The Role of Ethics in Athletic Participation

by

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PART ONE

Introduction

Sport has always been viewed as a competitive forum that allows for participants to learn lessons and gain benefits as an outcome. Historically, sport has been viewed as a way for individuals to gain moral lessons and to exercise discipline which would translate into positive life experiences. Competitive sports are filled with rules, laws and regulations that attempt to provide a set of norms to ensure that its participants are able to compete on a level playing field. As in life, people have to make a decision based on many different factors as to how closely they will adhere to the rules that govern the sport or game in which they participate. Some athletes seek to gain an unfair advantage by cheating or disregarding the set of rules and norms that have been set. So, do ethics play in these athletic settings?

In planning the outline for this paper and gathering research and data, there needed to be a starting point to work from relative to the importance of Sport Ethics. Conn & Gerdes (1998) suggest that ethics play a role in the various aspects of the sporting experience including sport policies, institutions and behaviors of all involved. Other ideas have emerged, including one by Butcher & Schneider (2001) where they define sportsmanship as “a respect for the game, a devotion or commitment to a sport that transcends particular triumphs and failures” (p. 24). Lehman (2001) defines sportsmanship as “a matter of being good (character) and doing right (action) in sports” (p. 242). Others would argue that cheating does not diminish one's respect for sport and is

mutually exclusive from “respecting the game.” A closer look at this dynamic is expected to yield an outcome where different environments, intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence various athletes differently.

This paper will look at many different aspects of the role of ethics in athletic participation, with the main emphases being placed on competition and peer interaction and the influence of coaches and parents on those who participate in athletics. The literature will demonstrate why ethics in athletic participation is an important topic that needs to be examined through the scope of the athlete and the many different factors that construct and influence the environment where decisions to follow rules are made.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to determine what role ethics plays in athletic participation and what intrinsic and/or extrinsic factors may influence the decision making process of athletes. Once identified, the information found in this paper can be used to help athletes understand their own thought processes concerning rules adherence and to assist them in making a conscious decision to follow the rules to achieve their goals.

Statement of Problem

The exploration of the literature will reveal the many factors and conditions that an athlete faces that will influence their decision to participate within the confines of the rules. Cheating in sport is a problem if the goal of the competition is to provide a level playing field where opponents are able to compete fairly to achieve victory. The literature will either vet this thought process out or will show that cheating is not a

significant problem. The literature will also examine an eclectic set of circumstances that often influence an athlete to determine whether a moral based viewpoint of sport and athletic competition will be held or if the end (winning or success) justifies the means (gaining any advantage to succeed in competition).

Justification

Sports are playing a more prominent role in our society and athletes are constantly faced with decisions relative to the adherence to policies and rules. This paper will review the literature on the many different factors and outcomes that come from cheating as opposed to keeping the rules that can assist coaches, administrators and parents in teaching rules adherence to athletes who may be faced with the moral dilemma to win at all costs. In addition, this paper will set the stage for research to fully understand the symptoms of a much greater issue, cheating.

Constraints

Accuracy of information and the lack of honest disclosure in studies due to the fear of repercussion could be a major constraint in the literature. If athletes are participating in a league or organized association, they may not want to disclose their true feelings, fearing reprisals or sanctions. This could skew the data and not provide a clear picture of the population being studied.

PART TWO

Literature Review

A thorough review of the literature will be conducted to help gain an understanding of how ethics are viewed in athletic participation. It must also be established what factors play a role in pressuring an athlete to be tempted to cheat. Conn & Gerdes (1998) suggested that the principles that shape ethical conduct have remained constant while the human element in sport have chosen to manipulate those principles in ways which foster self-aggrandizement and self-promotion- ethics have become situational. Being that they have become situational, athletes can determine in what scenarios rules can be broken. Further, Morgan (2002) found that the socialization into sports nowadays has as much to do with becoming adept at manipulating, breaking and bending the rules, not to mention other forms of cheating and violence, as it does with furtherance of athletic excellence. Cheating can be viewed as another aspect of the game that one must learn how to do in order to compete.

Historical Importance of Ethical Participation in Sport

Many cultures and societies have recognized the importance of moral learning in sport and the benefits that come from its participation. Historically, there are many reasons that societies on the macro level and people on the micro level have been involved with athletic participation. Conn & Gerdes (1998) reflect on the society in Ancient Greece in the days of Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato and the impact that the Olympic Games had on morality inasmuch as the concentration of competition centered

on the acquisition of virtue and the attainment of ‘god like’ status in physique, mental prowess, and spiritual integrity.

A different part of the globe during a different period of time realized the same rewards that athletic participation had on their society and country. The sporting courts and fields were breeding grounds for tomorrow’s leaders. The Duke of Wellington held this belief stating, “the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton” (Horn, 2002, p. 18).

Horn (2002) also provided another example of the “Muscular Christianity Movement” in the 19th century. This movement was formed to help cultivate the spirit through sport participation. These examples show that sport was used as a vehicle to achieve many things other than winning alone. Whether it was development with physical, mental or spiritual abilities, there has been a theme that athletic participation provides a classroom for gaining such traits.

Back (2009) outlined how many different cultures cherished sport and used it for the development of their societies for different purposes. “In the West, many have claimed that engaging in sports does indeed develop and improve your moral character. Plato advocated education of the body as well as of the mind. The Athenians generally took participating in sport to help them be strong citizens better prepared for military service” (p. 218-219).

On the other hand, some societies viewed sport as simply play and left a distinction between its role in their society and its potential preparatory role for combat. Back (2009) shares how the Spartans did not participate in any Olympic competitions

that had direct military application. Events such as boxing and the javelin throw were not participated in because they considered their military skills serious and deadly, not sporting and playful.”

The sporting venues in some of these societies, including the Olympics, were used to produce and train warriors and soldiers whose role was to protect their countries and societies from their enemies. The health benefits were sought after as well as the balance and mental prowess that comes from exercise and athletic participation.

Kleiber & Roberts (1981) found that it is logical to the point of evidence being present for the position that organized sport allows for the teaching of responsibility, conformity, and subordination for the greater good, and for shaping achievement behavior by encouraging persistence, delay of gratification, and even a degree or risk taking.” Sage (1998) confirmed that since the early part of the 20th century, American sports have been widely and strongly viewed as a vehicle for developing character and are a great forum for moral development.

Moral Development

Haan (1978) offers five moral levels and three phases to understand the natural process that an athlete may undertake. During the assimilation phase, consisting of levels 1 and 2, others' interests and needs are not given equal consideration to those of the self. In contrast, the accommodation phase, which includes levels 3 and 4, is characterized by the subordination of personal interests and needs to those of others. Only at Level 5, the equilibration phase, are all interests and needs coordinated in an

attempt to optimize situation specific potentialities for mutually satisfying responses to interpersonal difficulties.

Kohlberg (1984) demonstrates a similar thinking through his theory of moral development. He finds that moral reasoning goes through different levels of development and represents the major determinant of future moral behavior. Decisions are not necessarily made at the moment that a moral dilemma is encountered. Instead, there have been many predetermining experiences that have foreshadowed the outcome.

Rest (1984) argued that a fundamental aspect of morality is moral behavior and that to understand behavior, we need to understand the processes that underlie moral action. He proposed that four processes underlie each moral action: a) interpreting the situation by recognizing that it involves a moral issue; b) forming a moral judgment about what ought to be done, which includes both judgment and reasoning; c) deciding what one intends to do by selecting among competing values; d) implementing one's intentions, that is actual behavior

For Rest, moral development involves gaining proficiency in all four processes, and deficiency in any of these processes can result in morale failure. Further, the four processes interact with each other through feedback and feed-forward loops and a number of factors influence them. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) applied Rest's model to sport and proposed that the moral atmosphere of the team influences moral judgment, which is the second component of Rest's model. Group norms were found to have an impact on moral reasoning.

Four tenants & principles have been outlined that are undeniably linked to numerous core values upon which sports were founded several thousand years ago. These principles speak largely to character development in much greater magnitude than they speak to accumulation of victories. They are as follows: a) athletes must always be considered ends and not means (Merriman and Hill, 1992); b) the competition must be fair (Jones, Wells, Peters & Johnson, 1988); c) participation, leadership, resources and rewards must be based on achievement rather than ascribed characteristics (Coakley, 1994); d) the activity must provide for the relative safety of the participants (Conn, 1997).

These tenants intertwine sport's ideals and ethics with the daily activities of its participants. Many believe that there is a direct correlation between the activities that one will perform during a sport competition and the actions that one will perform in everyday life when decisions have to be made. These scholars have provided a foundation that would provide a safe environment in which an athlete could enjoy the thrill of sport without having to have their experience compromised by these aforementioned factors or pressures.

Cheating

In modern times, the love and passion for sports from a sociological perspective has flourished. Myles Brand (2006), former president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association outlines a brief history of the relationship between America and collegiate athletics. "America began its fascination with college sports in the middle of the 19th century... By the latter half of the 20th century, the general public often knew some of its universities not as centers of learning but as hosts for big-time sports. The interest of the

broadcast media has made these sporting events even more popular and accessible in the past few decades. (p. 9-10).

In times past, professional athletes were thought of as those wanting to gain an advantage because of the level of competition they encountered. This thought process has also been prevalent in the collegiate ranks. Then again, is cheating simply a pervasive issue that we are dealing with in sport, or is this issue more of a sociological issue that is spilling over into sport? Many scholars have ventured a look into this question and their findings are diverse.

The literature suggests that people who play sports can benefit from bending the rules to gain an advantage. Although this may be the case, each individual must evaluate how they personally define “benefit” and must assess the risk versus reward of doing so. If they decide to break the rules, athletes have many different motives to cheat. Dodge & Robertson (2004), provide a few justifications for unethical behavior in sport that may be adopted by its participants including: a) everyone else is doing it; b) the emphasis on winning; c) it’s okay if you’re not caught; and d) the coaches influence.

Everyone else is doing it

The pressure to win and/or succeed can be great. Should an athlete determine that their competitor may be cheating to gain an advantage, they are often times placed in a moral dilemma that may cause for them to decide whether they need to even the playing field by cheating as well. Heikkala (1993) found that some athletes are able to conclude that their opponents are cheating and gaining an advantage. This leaves them to feel that

if they do not cheat to level the playing field, they will be put at a disadvantage. Cowart (1989) agreed that athletes are simply keeping the playing field level by cheating.

The emphasis on winning

Eitzen (1988) states that, “the ultimate purpose of competition is to win, but too often the doctrine of ‘winning is the only thing’ means that the end justifies the means” (p. 17). For some athletes, the difference between winning and second place can mean millions of dollars in endorsements, public appearances, and sponsorships. These pressures can lend themselves to providing an environment where winning is the most important aspect of sport participation. Lumpkin et al (1994)“ suggested as winning became the central focus of participation, athletes would do whatever it took to attain victory. The goal orientation of the athlete would play a key role into determining whether cheating was a viable option.

The goal of all athletes who participate in sports is to succeed, which in most cases means to win. After all, one of the greatest coaches of all time, Vince Lombardi, can be credited for making a statement that can be the used to underline the importance that is placed on winning. He stated, “Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing” (Dixon, 2001).

Webb (1969) found that a socialization process occurs in sport that leads athletes to increasingly prioritize victory over fair play. According to the main findings of his research of professionalization, an early focus on fair play and fun is increasingly supplanted by a value orientation centered on winning as athletes mature, spend more time in sport or enter more elite realms of sport.

It's okay if you're not caught

Some athletes engage in illegal behaviors hoping they will not be caught. Feezel (1988) wrote about specific examples of cheating and noted that there is intent to gain an unfair advantage and deception is involved. Gaining an unfair advantage involves deception since you would not want your competitors to realize that you have altered conditions in order to put yourself at an advantage. Cheating must be a principle of honor within an individual and the criteria to do so must not be based on the fact if you are caught or not.

The coach's influence.

The speech and actions of a coach will certainly influence the actions and perceptions of the purpose of the athlete's participation. Kavanagh & Fall (1995) drew the conclusion that young athletes mirror the behaviors and actions of their coaches. A challenge exists in studies being performed in this area based on the risk that a player's answers on a survey may be impacted by a perceived repercussion from a coach and a fear that their opinions may be discovered. Another challenge that is encountered when attempting to perform studies in this area is that one athlete may not interpret the approach and coaching style in the same way that another athlete may.

Bower and Pelletier (2002) found that athletes interpret coaches' actions differently; therefore, effective coaching behavior should vary as the characteristics of the athletes and the situation changes (Sherman, Fuller & Speed, 2000). In the Sherman study, it was found that female athletes have a greater preference for a participative style of coaching and coaches who demonstrate democratic behavior. They enjoyed the

latitude of determining their own course of action and making their own decisions when it came to rules adherence.

Research has also shown a dichotomy in how male and female coaches approach ethics in their coaching styles. Drewe (2003) reported that male coaches apply a set of core beliefs to ethical issues based upon their own past experiences while female coaches treat ethical issues as situational, that is, by addressing specific factors related to each particular ethical situation. The same study also found that female coaches believe in giving athletes a high degree of autonomy to their players in ethical decision making while male coaches expressed a desire to limit an athlete's autonomy and exert greater control over athletes in this regard. Male coaches wanted more control over the decision making process of their players while female coaches wanted their players to determine their own course of action.

Stephens and Bredemeier (1996) found that the player's perception of their coach's goal orientation was a greater predictor of the athlete's temptation to play unfairly than their own goal orientation. Simply put, the pressure that a coach can apply on an athlete to win can be enough for that player to cheat in order to attain the goal that has been verbalized or demonstrated. Burke (2001) refers to various forms of manipulation coaches employ that are directly related to the almost unquestioned authority apparent in many coach-athlete relationships. This influence is based on coaches viewing their athletes as possessions and on athletes displaying loyalty and obedience without questioning the restrictions established by the coach. Gibbons (1994) notes that "for some athletes, the coach becomes a substitute parent and in doing so

becomes the 'teacher' of many moral lessons based solely on how they act and react in sport situations (p. 13).

Hanson (2003) provides some insight into why cheating is taking place and how cheating in sport is a larger symptom of societal ills. He suggests that cheating in sport is simply a product of cheating in society. Cheating is taking place on the SAT tests and teachers are guilty of encouraging this behavior by providing answers to students so they can qualify for bonuses. Athletes cheat by using performance enhancing drugs and society has lost their commitment to integrity and fair play.

Giamatti (1989) states that, "the highly moralized (because rule-bound) world of any sport is very fragile in the face of the amoral quest for betterment, the hunger to win at any cost, even the cost of destroying the game being the only context where winning in this way has any meaning whatsoever" (p. 63). Hon & O'Connor (1994) suggested that for the good of the greater society, our high school athletes must learn about the importance of team play and fair play. Sessions (2004) provides insight to the internal struggle that athletes face concerning their decision making process while participating in athletics because sportsmanship and winning tend to provide a tension to the athlete as they are opposing forces at times.

One of the more interesting perspectives was introduced by Shogan (1988) who was interested in addressing not only the moral side of cheating but also the legal versus moral distinction as it relates to behavior in sport. These rules are encountered by all athletes and have a universal applicability in every type of sporting environment. Shogan identified three types of rules in sport that have an impact on the sporting experience:

- *Descriptive rules* that lay out technical specifications such as court dimensions.
- *Prescriptive rules* that identify actions in which an athlete must engage such as dribbling a basketball.
- *Proscriptive rules* that identify actions an athlete must not perform.

While descriptive rules are consistent to both sides of a competition, prescriptive rules are generally broken only by unskilled athletes, while proscriptive rules are often broken as game strategy, such as fouling an opponent hoping to gain possession of a basketball after the penalty throw.

Shogan (1988) also addresses the role of the officials in how ethics and cheating are viewed and their role in the process. “Officials are only responsible for monitoring legal transgressions, not moral ones. A neutral rule only becomes a moral concern when a player is counting on other players not to break certain rules, but one intentionally does. There is generally no authority in sport charged with the responsibility to monitor morality. Moral wrongdoing often coincides with legal wrongdoing, but sport officials penalize only the legal wrongdoing” (p. 8).

Competition and Peer Interaction

There are many forums in our society that can immerse an individual in a competitive setting. As competition arises and we learn more about those that are in our environment, decisions need to be made in all areas of life about how we are going to act. The athletic world is no different than other forums and venues in society.

When placed in a tough athletic struggle, the opportunity to keep rules or usurp them for one's benefit presents itself. Many arguments arise in the literature as to the purpose of athletic participation and the role that ethics should play in it. Some would argue that the innate lessons learned from competition are enough to justify its existence and that the outcome is not important.

Apgar (1977) suggested that it is necessary for the desire to win to be present in an athletic competition. If the desire to win is taken out of the competition, the enjoyment and satisfaction of winning and participating are reduced and in some cases eliminated. While it is important not to eliminate the importance of winning, athletic administrators and coaches need to be sensitive to the other benefits of playing sports. This would suggest that the end goal of winning plays a key role in participating in the first place and the removal of its importance could minimize the natural benefits of the competitive setting.

Another major question that needs to be answered through the literature is, What do athletic participants hope to gain by becoming involved with competition through their sport of choice? Doty (2001) suggests that our society values in the importance of participating in sports. People play sports for health reasons as well as character building and socialization. Michener (1976) builds on Doty's viewpoint concerning socialization by offering the idea that young people need acceptance in society. They will seek it out and can gain that acceptance in many ways. In the United States, sports tends to primarily fill that need. Mewett (2002) shares an even different viewpoint. "Cheating is

integral to modern sport, that the model of sport as 'fair play' is simply an ideological guise of amateurism.”

Velasquez (2003), states, “Cheating is everything that ethics is not. People cheat for all kinds of reasons. Their goal is the same, however. They want to get something that doesn't belong to them. It violates the standards of right and wrong. That is, cheating is about doing what we should not be doing. It is wrong. Conversely, ethical standards guide us to what we should do, how we should think about life and all aspects of it, including but not limited to the right of privacy, the right from injury or harm and, as members of a shared community, the right to a just and unpolluted sports program.”

As studies are conducted to find out the motives of those athletes that do not keep the rules and the factors that contribute to their actions, a stark reality may be present that would not defy common sense and would summarize the reasons as to why athletes feel the need to cheat. Boone (2003) determined that the pressure of failing is often times too much to deal with for some athletes. This motivation can lead them to cheat to gain the necessary advantage to win.

Sportsmanship is a term that seems to be present in most of the literature when discussing the role of ethics in athletic participation. Sessions (2004) examines the term *sportsmanship* and compares its tenets to those that are consisted in the term *honor*, then demonstrates the different types of honor that he is speaking of. Sportsmanship appears to be, and often is, in tension with or even opposition to a central point of competitions: winning.

If athletes are giving 100% of their time and effort to winning, then is cheating and doing whatever is necessary to win part of the ingredients that comprise the 100%? Sessions (2004) would disagree with that assertion by sharing that winning is important but it is just as important to win fairly. An athlete should follow both the letter and spirit of the law and show the necessary respect for the competition by being a good sport whether they win or lose. He argues that “the rules and principles of sportsmanship aren’t constitutive of the game but rather of (part of) that group’s honor code- a set of principles held in common as matters of honor by all members of the honor group, in a bond of mutual recognition.”

In Sessions’ (2004) article, he distinguishes between three different types of honor when comparing it to sportsmanship. *Conferred honor* is a gift from others, resting on their view of the honoree; it is basically reputation. *Positional honor* is a matter of being, having, or doing something that position one ‘above’ other in a social group. *Personal honor* means adhering firmly to the honor code of some honor group, understanding what that honor code requires, prohibits, and permits; being able to act according to the code; being motivated to do so; and effectively willing it.

A prominent difference is found when using gender as a variable for the tolerance of cheating in sports. John M. Silva (1983) performed a study that helped provide some insight into the motivations of males and females concerning the acceptability of rule violating behavior. The study was conducted by showing eight slides to 203 male and female athletes and non-athletes who were scheduled in groups of 10 to 12 individuals.

Subjects were categorized according to: (a) gender, (b) amount of physical contact, (c) highest level or organized sport participation, and (d) years of participation.

In order to work from the same common ground, the slides were shown to 16 professionals who were professors in physical education and college coaches. They rated what they saw on the slides in order to acquire a mean score to determine which eight slides should be shown to the students. Seven of the slides clearly depicted rule violating behavior in the sports of baseball, basketball, football, ice hockey and soccer. Each slide was projected for a period of ten seconds. During that time, the subjects noted; (a) the sport being played, (b) the primary behavior or act being portrayed on the slide, and (c) in their own opinion, how acceptable or legitimate would it be for them to exhibit the behavior shown at some point during the game. The subjects rated the unacceptability/acceptability of the behavior shown on each slide on a scale of 1 to 4, (totally unacceptable-totally acceptable).

Numerous tests were performed on the data and the results indicated the male respondents rated rule violating behaviors significantly more acceptable than females. Other findings showed support for an in-sport socialization process that legitimizes rules violating behavior. This perceived legitimacy was considerably more pronounced for males than for females at all levels of analysis.

There was a higher level of perceived legitimacy of rule violating behavior by both males and females who participated in organized sport for 11 years or more, showing that years participated in sport tends to allow an athlete to become immune to

the negative effects of rule violating behavior and raises their level of acceptability towards the acts.

Silva (1983) concluded through his study that the major objective of his study was to determine if the perceived legitimacy of rule violating sport behavior is systematically influenced by a respondent's gender, the amount of physical contact characteristic in sport(s) played, the years of participation in organized sport, or the highest level of participation in organized sport. The results indicated that the gender of an individual significantly influenced perceptions of legitimacy. Females not only rated the projected rule violating behaviors as unacceptable, they also had lower ratings than males at every sampling point on all of the categorical variables assessed. This gender difference seems to indicate that female socialization toward potentially dangerous rule violating sport behavior does not legitimize this type of behavior to the same extent present for males.

McPherson et al., (1989) summarized their findings in their research by offering this explanation as to why cheating has become more prominent amongst female athletic participants. "Engagement in unethical behavior in sport has traditionally been associated with male athletes, reflecting their dominance of sport, especially at the elite levels. Increasingly, however, similar behaviors have been observed among female athletes. As the number of women participating in sport increases, the escalation in unethical behavior among female sport participants can be explained in various ways including increased value placed on winning as women's sport has become more competitive and professionalized; women becoming socialized into sport by a process similar to males and learning similar values, norms and behaviors; and women wanting to

be perceived as equal to male athletes and, thereby, demonstrating valued male behaviors.”

Influence of Coaches and Peers

Throughout the literature review, there is a pervasive theme that has emerged concerning outward influences on individuals participating in athletics. The role of the coach, parent, teammate or peer contributes toward the perception of fair play and contributes to the decision making process of the individual participant as to whether they find cheating acceptable or are willing to participate in unethical behavior. Recent work by Robertson (2002), which investigated primary influences of sport and recreation on youth, reported that coaches were more influential than parents and teachers, and second only to friends.

Gulley (1964) points out that one of the key roles that a coach takes on is that of a spiritual mentor. He mentions three important educational tenets of this capacity. They are:

- Teaching and coaching are cooperative arts. Students and athletes learn from teachers and coaches by applying self-evident principles to certain competitive situations and, in turn, arrive at knowledge of things they did not previously know.
- Physical education teachers and coaches do not simply stimulate students and athletes. While players possess an in-born potentiality for knowledge and good behavior, coaches help them actualize this potential.

- Teaching and coaching are centered in truth. Just as certain principles of practice and competition produce victory, they should also create good conduct. Coaches should be greatly involved in teaching these truths.

Some of the ethical violations discovered by Conn & Foshee (1989, 1990) in their findings were that “coaches are playing players who are not eligible, conducting out of season practices, illegally recruiting out of district players, playing injured players in order to win ‘championships’, leaving players stranded on buses in a desert, molesting players and improperly desensitizing (moderating the intense emotions and actions of competition) athletes post-contest and re-socializing them back into the mainstream” (p. 17).

Bivins (1992) suggests that coaches should follow a rigid five step moral code of obligations to assist them in providing important lessons to all involved in the process. Integrity to the following aspects of the individuals personal and professional life was found to be paramount in order to achieve an optimal level of satisfaction through their profession. They are as follows:

- To ourselves- to preserve our own integrity
- To our athletes- to honor their contracts and to use our professional expertise on our athletes behalf.
- To our sport organization- to adhere to organizational goals and policies.
- To our profession and our professional colleagues- to uphold the standards of the profession and, by extension, the reputation of our fellow practitioners.
- To society- to consider social needs and claims.

The role and influence of a coach on a player is important to the sporting experience. Drewe (2003) offered the idea that coaches fill important socially sanctioned roles, roles that carry certain rights and responsibilities. Included in the responsibilities is teaching through example. (Coaches) have a role to play in facilitating the development of moral reasoning skills in athletes by suggesting appropriate behaviors and condemning those considered to be socially unacceptable.

Some coaches were not adequately trained to effectively prepare the athletes on proper ethical behavior. Others are not enforcing the established code of sportsmanship. Some coaches had indicated that they were uncomfortable dealing with value education or that they lacked the necessary resource materials. Other coaches had suggested that because of the counter-effects of parents, professional athletes, the mass media and our current society, it was a losing battle trying to develop a value system in their athletes.

Coaches, parents and teammates play a key role in in establishing norms and acceptable practices for sport participants. It is important that coaches and parents tell their players what is expected of them and inform them of any consequences should they decide not to play within the framework of the team rules. This allows for players to understand that their coaches and parents expect for them to play by the rules and will not tolerate any deviance from the rules.

There are many outside influences that assist in laying a moral foundation that will be tested when an athlete decides to participate in sports. Stoll (2000) suggested that peers play a key role in moral development in sport. While individuals learn from their family, traditions, friends and religious groups, when they enter the work of sport, they

tend to be heavily influenced by what their peers value and practice. Societal norms, values and practices in general and in sport also share the environment as does the media through television, movies and newsprint.

The influence of role models is one that can have an impact on athletes and their actions. Feezel (2005) differentiates between the different types of role models that influence some athletes. “We should distinguish between being a role model in a descriptive sense and being a role model in a normative sense. A role model in a descriptive sense is one whose conduct (or life) is actually the object of imitation or is at least believed to be worthy of imitation. A role model in a normative sense is one whose conduct or life with *worthy* of being imitate or worthy of being some kind of exemplar” (p. 22).

Self Determination Theory (SDT) is a theoretical framework that has been extensively used during the last decade to study cognitive, affective and behavioral consequences of different types of motivation in sport and other physical activity settings. Deci & Ryan (2002) suggested that socio-contextual factors can influence human motivation by affecting three basic and innate psychological needs. These are the need to feel autonomous (i.e, have a sense of ownership in one's actions), competent (i.e., feel efficacious in producing desired outcomes), and related (i.e., form meaningful relationships with others). SDT plays a role in sport ethics, especially through the tenant of Relatedness. While the desire exists for an athlete to have a quality relationship with a coach or teammates, it is important the individuals chosen have a strong moral conviction as the team and coach play a huge role in the decision making process of an athlete.

Ntoumanis & Standage (2009) performed a study using a sample of 314 athletes (170 male and 144 female) to examine whether social-contextual and personal motivation variables proposed by SDT can predict reported levels of sportpersonship and antisocial moral attitudes in sport. Structural equation modeling analysis showed that perceptions of coach autonomy support were positive predictors of athletes' satisfaction of their psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy. In turn, the three needs were positive predictors of autonomous motivation. Autonomous motivation positively predicted sportpersonship and negatively predicted antisocial moral attitudes in sport. The opposite pattern of results was observed between controlled motivation and the sportpersonship and antisocial moral attitudes variables.

These findings emphasize the importance of autonomy supportive environments, psychological need satisfaction, and autonomous motivation for fostering sportpersonship in sport. Autonomous motivation was a strong predictor of sportpersonship and a negative predictor of antisocial attitudes. In contrast, controlled motivation was a strong positive predictor of antisocial attitudes and a negative predictor of sportpersonship. These findings also demonstrate the importance of autonomy supportive coaching behaviors in sport. Coaches who facilitate their athletes' volition, offer them opportunities to experience success, and form meaningful relationships (and promote such relationships among their athletes) are likely to satisfy their athletes' psychological needs, foster their self-determination, facilitate sportpersonship behaviors, and reduce antisocial moral attitudes in sport.

Stuart & Ebbeck (1995) found in their study that young basketball players who perceived their coach and teammates to endorse a range of what are commonly regarded as unacceptable behaviors, were more likely to endorse and intend to engage in such behaviors themselves. These young basketball players were possibly inclined to engage in similar behaviors due to external regulation motives, such as to obtain social approval, attain rewards, or because of fear of punishment (in case they did not engage in such behaviors). This same study differentiated between the social approval offered by mothers, fathers and coaches and found that mothers' approval had the highest relevance to moral development among younger children while teammates' approval was more important among older youngsters.

Vallerand, Deshaies, Cuerrier, Briere, and Pelletier (1996) performed a study asking a large sample of young athletes to provide their definition of sportspersonship and examples of sportsmanlike behavior. Drawing from the results of this survey, Vallerand et al. (1996, 1997) proposed a multidimensional definition of sportspersonship encompassing the following five aspects:

- Full commitment to participation
- Respect for social conventions
- Respect for rules and officials
- Respect for opponents
- A negative approach to participation

Only the last factor focuses on an antisocial dimension (i.e., the importance of winning at all costs). As such, Vallerand et al. identified and subsequently assessed primarily positive socio-moral behaviors involved in sports participation in this study.

Dodge & Robertson (2004) conducted a study with 91 varsity athletes that participated in the sports of soccer, hockey and volleyball. There were 31 males and 60 females. Varsity athletes were selected to ensure that they had been exposed to the issues being investigated due to their participation in their sport at a high level. The two questions asked were, “what types of unethical decisions are most commonly faced by varsity athletes and what factors are most commonly used to justify engagement in unethical behaviors?” To determine the variables a review of literature was undertaken and information was collected from both undergraduate and graduate students studying physical education, most of who were athletes, as well as from a group of community sport coaches and recreation leaders. The most common types of unethical behaviors identified through this process were: using performance-enhancing drugs, bending the rules, and using illegal equipment.

The four major justifications that emerged were: *as long as you win, the means can be justified, as long as you do not get caught, if you believe that others do the same thing, or if your coach suggests it, then it is justified.* The participants were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with the justifications and the justifications were each paired with the three common aforementioned types of cheating. The majority of participants did not agree with any of the justifications. However, some athletes did agree with certain justifications including the coach suggesting that the athlete engage in specific

forms of unethical behavior. Males generally reported stronger levels of agreement with these justifications for unethical behavior. Females appeared most comfortable with cheating if the coach suggested it. Although much of the data showed differing results, the consistent theme was that both males and females were more likely to bend the rules if a coach suggests it.

Conclusion to Literature Review

Many studies and works from scholars have been examined in this literature review. There is an eclectic group of research that has addressed many different aspects of the role of ethics in athletic participation. The conclusion is apparent that ethics play a large role in athletic participation. As an individual decides to join a team or play a particular sport, they will have opened themselves up to many external influences that will influence them to have to make a choice to cheat or not. In addition, there will be many internal influences that will play a role in the decision making process. Athletes need to determine their goal orientation and decide what their purpose is for playing a particular sport. Once this criteria is established, it will be the motive and foundation for the many decisions that will be made.

From the history and origin of sport to overall moral development, this paper starts at the beginning of the equation and then moves into the individual and specific aspects of how ethics and cheating finds its way into competition. In conclusion, ethics must be present in order for a level playing field to be established so that competition can exist. While people may decide to cheat to gain an advantage, the motive to do so may

have been driven by the desire to win, the pressure applied by a coach or peer or the individual's decision to gain every advantage.

PART THREE

Introduction

The purpose of this paper was to determine what role ethics play in athletic participation and to determine what intrinsic and/or extrinsic factors may influence the decision making process of athletes. Cheating is a systemic problem in sport and this problem has been examined. The literature outlined the motives and justifications as to why athletic participants cheat. The information found can be used to help athletes understand their own thought processes concerning rules adherence and to assist them in making a conscious decision to follow the rules to achieve their goals.

Various factors such as gender, longevity in sport and coaches influence were examined and yielded an eclectic set of results. These external factors play a role in tempting an athlete to cheat, but it becomes the sole obligation of the individual athlete to determine whether cheating is a justifiable action or if integrity and rules adherence has a place in competitive competition.

Results

The literature demonstrated that historically sport and athletic participation was valued and used to train and mold citizens to play a key role in defending their various countries and to benefit from both physical and moral development (Conn & Gerdes, 1998). Early sport and athletic competition was founded on the premise that the athlete would build their moral character and then later contribute to their society both as a productive citizen and militarily. If the early goal of sport was to accomplish these criteria, then it would be safe to say that sport has evolved with motives such as winning,

earning a living and establishing a legacy and reputation playing a key role in the motives of athletes today.

There are many factors that play a role in tempting an athlete to cheat. The gender of the athlete was found to play a role when it came to determining whether they would cheat or not, as well as the longevity of an athlete participating in a sport, (Silva, 1983). Females evaluated during his study indicated that projected rule violating behaviors were unacceptable at a much higher level than males. There was a higher level of perceived legitimacy of rule violating behavior by both males and females who participated in organized sport for 11 years or more. These results clearly show that the gender of the athlete influences the perceived legitimacy of rule violating behavior in their perceptions.

Other internal factors that were discovered to play a role in whether an athlete would cheat or not were the athlete's goal orientation and purpose for participation, Stephens and Bredemeier (1996). Every individual has different motives and purposes for participating in sport. If their goal orientation and purpose for participation was to win, then there is a greater likelihood for cheating to take place. Should an individual decide to participate for social reasons (affiliation) and physical benefits, then the likelihood for cheating to take place would be minimized.

Many external factors were identified that also tempt an athlete to cheat. These pressures exist and will be handled differently by each individual and their perceptions of how each factor is tolerated and to what degree each issue violates the rules. Keeping the playing field level was identified as an external factor as to why cheating takes place,

Cowart (1989). Athletes can justify their immoral actions but stating that their competition is cheating, so they need to as well in order to keep the competition fair.

Dodge & Robertson (2004) provided another justification for unethical behavior in sport that has been adopted by it's participants. The emphasis on winning is just too great so athletes will need to win by any means necessary. If winning is provided as the only outcome of athletic participation, than many can see the ends (cheating) justifying the mean (winning). This pressure can be both internal and external and can drive an athlete to do many things. The pressure to win can come from many sources and these external factors will now be discussed.

The influence of parents also acts as an important external factor that can influence an athlete to cheat. Coaches had suggested that because of the counter-effects of parents, they felt that their influence and teaching of the importance of rules adherence was being negated. Parents lay a foundation in an individual's life that assist them in forming views on rules and authority. They also can contribute positively to the athletic experience by supporting the positive views of a coach.

The influence of peers is another external factor that is present in the sporting experience. Stuart & Ebbeck (1995) found in their study that young basketball players who perceived their coach and teammates to endorse a range of what are commonly regarded as unacceptable behaviors, were more likely to endorse and intend to engage in such behaviors themselves. Peer pressure has always existed and it is not mutually exclusive from athletic participation.

Conclusion

Ethical decision-making plays a role in athletic participation. Every individual will face the pressure to cheat and to gain an advantage in an unfair manner. Cheating must be discouraged at every level of a sports organization, league, association and team. In order for competition to be fair, rules must be governed and kept. Success must be determined based on performance within the confines of the rules and not by winning and success solely. Natural outcomes must be encouraged while unnatural advantages must be discouraged and punished heavily.

Sport participants must prepare to face many influences as they undertake the quest of participating in sports. Influences will arise that may persuade them to take risks or commit acts that they may not otherwise do in any other social setting. Influences are present from teammates, coaches, parents and one's own expectations that will play a crucial role in how an athlete will decide to play. When all of the aforementioned factors are considered, one must have a high level of integrity to withstand the pressures that form and to make decisions for themselves. Whether they decide to adhere to the structured rules in a given sport or competition, the decision should be theirs and not be formed or carried out because of the influence of others and external factors.

Recommendations

In order for a solution to be implemented that would help to alleviate these challenges, the leadership in the various arenas of sporting venues must take the necessary time to ensure that it's participants fully understand the rules that govern their individual sport. They must be taught and/or informed of both the rules and penalties

should rules violations take place. A major emphasis must be placed on the importance of winning with honor and participating in sport with dignity. Ignorance cannot be a defense should someone or some team gets caught violating the rules. I would recommend that all professional and amateur organizations require that it's participant attend a mandatory workshop. The rules handbook must be signed by the participant to demonstrate that they are aware of what is expected of them and that they are also aware of what sanctions or penalties they will face if they decide to make decisions that cause the playing field to become not level.

In conclusion, athletic participants will have to decide for themselves if they will subscribe to a fair and equitable model of play or not. Should a rule violation or infraction take place, they must be punished swiftly and fairly to ensure that integrity is sought after and that those other athletes that are deciding to adhere to the rules are not being placed at a disadvantage.

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