

Book Review: Sports Ethics: Application for Fair Play

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BOOK REVIEWS

SPORTS ETHICS: APPLICATION FOR FAIR PLAY

Angela Lumpkin, Sharon Kay Stoll, & Jennifer Beller

[St. Louis, Mo: Lumpkin WCB McGraw Hill 1999]

xv/ 214 pages

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Sport Ethics addresses an issue many have labeled an oxymoron, ethics in sport. Utilizing increased media exposure, few sports related disciplines command the interest of fans, coaches, and athletes as ethical values. Unfortunately however, much of the media coverage focuses on dubious incidents including drug use, excessive violence, point-shaving, and unscrupulous coaching behavior.

Lumpkin and her colleagues deserve to be commended for achieving a balance between theory and application. First, theory boxes, simplifying terminology, concepts, and definitions, are included to assist readers in comprehending critical information relating to sport morality. Moreover, a detailed glossary provides references for further clarification of atypical terms.

Sport Ethics establishes a foundation for the remainder of the text in Chapters 1 through 3. Significant theoretical concepts developed by Freud, Piaget, and Kohlberg provide groundwork that influenced individual moral reasoning. Next, Chapters 4 through 11 present a variety of germane issues relative to competitive sport. Finally, Chapter 12 provides an epilogue summarizing major points of emphasis.

Introduced in Chapter 2 are the concepts of principles and values. Four moral values, including justice, honesty, responsibility, and beneficence, are defined. Additionally, philosophical values attributed to Emmanuel Kant are included. Chapter 3 provides five fundamental questions to serve as guidelines to assist individuals in thinking through a moral problem. These include:

1. Are any moral principles violated?
2. Are any moral rules violated?
3. Is this case an exception?
4. Are the rules justified?
5. How can the rules be changed?

Violence, intimidation, and gamesmanship, as implemented in various sport environments, provides the essence of Chapter 4. Ensuing in Chapter 5 are the introduction of three types of rules existing in sports including constitutive, proscriptive, and sportsmanship. Eligibility in sport is discussed in Chapter 6. Major issues confronting the participants in youth, interscholastic, intercollegiate, and Olympic sport revealed a number of questionable methods utilized in determining eligibility for athletes. The authors provide numerous ethical dilemmas which serve as excellent discussion topics.

In Chapter 7, the focus is on sport elimination. Specifically, how sport is played on the youth, interscholastic, collegiate, and professional levels are examined. Factors influencing sport elimination such as sport burnout, poor physical skills, pressures to win, psychological and physical burnout, and the tenuous relationships developed between coaches and teammates are detailed. Ethical dilemmas associated with ergogenic aids on sport performance is detailed in Chapter 8. Considering the enormous attention Mark McGwire received for using the drug androstenedione during his record breaking 1998 baseball season, this chapter was extremely time sensitive. Subsequent responses from drugs, including stimulants, depressants, and anabolic steroids, are reviewed. Also, blood doping, the controversial procedure intended to increase sport performance, is detailed.

Commercialized sport is documented in Chapter 9. Specifically, commercialized sport is presented from four perspectives: (1) sport for public relations and promotions; (2) sport as a business; (3) sport as entertainment; and (4) sports as a transmitter of economic values. In addition, the premise that sports serve as a contributor of character is discussed, despite minimal empirically based data to support this phenomenon.

Race and ethical issues formulate the theoretical foundation presented in Chapter 10. After providing a historical perspective to the reader, five prevailing cultural myths are identified. These include (1) the physical superiority of African Americans; (2) the intellectual inferiority complex that has been attributed to African Americans; (3) how African Americans have used sports as a vehicle for upward social mobility; (4) how African Americans have been trained to only fill reactive positions rather than leadership positions in sport; and (5) the misleading notion that African American athletes are treated on equal terms as their white teammates.

Next, gender discrimination is detailed in chapter 11. Landmark legislation including Title IX's impact is thoroughly documented. Specific

outcomes, including the elimination of men's programs and a noticeable decrease in the number of female coaches, resulting from Title IX implementation are discussed. The final chapter reviews the concepts of moral and nonmoral values, moral reasoning, and includes a discussion as to future concerns relative to sport ethics. One strength of each chapter is the fictional case scenarios presented in congruence with each specific theme outlined in the preceding chapter. These cases can easily be incorporated into small group discussions to challenge students on a number of key issues. That is, identifying the ethical dilemma, providing a rationale for solving the controversial issues, and possessing the skills to evaluate the multiple consequences of each case can enhance the learner's comprehension associated with the ethical dilemma.

Sport Ethics can be used as a primary or secondary source for college courses in ethics, management, law, or history as related to sport. In that sense, there potentially appears to be a myriad of ways for the book to be implemented in an educational environment.

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