

Integrity Issues in Competitive Sports

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Abstract: *Integrity in sports have over the past decade been a topical issue in sport literature and integrity scholars these is predominantly as a result of increased media and public attention to sports players, institutions, leagues, organizations and stakeholders in both on-field play and off-field player behavior contexts. In the past few years, these have included issues related to: match fixing, corruption and doping. It has been described by many, including high profile sporting figures, sport administrators and governing bodies, as a greater threat to the integrity of sport than doping. This threat is match-fixing. One of the most powerful guardians of sport, Jacques Rogge, the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), explains why, "Doping affects one individual athlete, but the impact of match-fixing affects the whole competition. It is much bigger." Illegal gambling is the principal driver of what Rogge has also called a "cancer". Three (3) of the stakeholder groups who play a significant role in the fostering of integrity are spectators, who have a greater impact on player attitudes than is commonly believed, players who play the game and governing bodies, professional and Amateur Association who are in a strong position to instill virtues of integrity in players, coaches and referees but who sometimes sacrifice this role. The aims of this paper were to explicate the concept of integrity of sports highlights integrity issues in sport, the role integrity play's in sport and provide some strategies and suggestions for integrity in sport.*

Keywords: *Ethic, Integrity, sports & competitive*

I. Introduction

Sport is increasingly big business and, crucially, associated with big business, thus providing opportunity and motivation for corrupt practices. Integrity is a complex term that takes on different meanings in different sporting environments: amateur, elite or professional sport, sporting levels, age groups: and according to different (Sipes, 1976).

Integrity is generally viewed as critical area in today's world, and the sport environment is really no different and reasons for integrity behavior in sport and its allied support mechanisms are attributed to many factors, some of these factors are match fixing, corruption and doping, others reasons are overemphasis on winning, seeking prestige or financial rewards, bending the rules, cheating, coach aggression, disrespect, and player aggression; Lack of practical understanding of sportsmanship and difference between gamesmanship and sportsmanship, Winning at all costs; verbal abuse, negative coaching behaviors and practices, athletes being pushed too hard by coaches or parents, negative administrative behaviors and practices and negative officiating behaviors and practices; Negative coaching behaviors and practices are perhaps some main reasons for many instances of misconduct by individuals (Howman, 2013).

Integrity in sport is largely addressed in research through concepts of fair play, respect for the game, sportsmanship, positive personal values of responsibility, compassion for the other, and honesty in adhering to rules (Lumpkin, Stoll, & Beller, 2003; Keating 2007; Gould and Carson 2008; Bolter 2010; Festini 2011;). Integrity in sport is largely addressed through the concepts of fair play, respect for the game, sportsmanship, positive personal values of responsibility, compassion for the other, and honesty in adhering to rules; concepts of fair play is more than a philosophical ideal that athletes subscribe to; it is a mode of social organization that demands dedication. It requires adherence to written rules, respect for unwritten rules and respect for fellow players, referees, opponents and fans. Fair play requires valuing friendly rivalries, team spirit, fair competition, equality, integrity, solidarity, tolerance, care, excellence and joy for sport and Gamesmanship (Butcher & Schneider 2003; Feezell 2007; Gould & Carson 2008; Bolter 2010; Festini 2011).

There is wide consensus that sports teaches values (Steenberg & Tamboer 1998; Hall 2006; Morgan 2007; Festini 2011), but whether these values are positive or negative depends on the way in which sports is played, taught, and practiced' (Boxill 2003). This brings into the equation the notion of consequentialism' (the end justifies the means) within acts of personal integrity (Feezell 2004; Rajczi 2009;), namely, that winning in what appears to be the greater good for the team/community is not an act of moral behavior if it lacks personal integrity on the part of the participants (Lumpkin, *et.al* 2003; Feezell 2004; Keating 2007; Rajczi 2009;). According to Gould & Carson, (2008), the attributes of respect, integrity, compassion, and positive values are internal assets of the individual. Fraser-Thomas *et al* (2005) also speaks of building internal assets. The overwhelming view in the literature is that sport reflects the values of the society in which it exists (Steenberg &

Tamboer 1998; Boxill 2003; Hall 2006; Morgan 2007; Festini 2011). To quote Shields & Bredemeier (1995) that the commercialization of sports has resulted in negative sports behaviors and a winning at all cost mentality (Holowchak, 2002; Hall 2006; Feezell, 2007; Festini 2011).

Butcher & Schneider (2003) conclude there is no complete definition of fair play, yet they claim that the intrinsic essence of fair play is respect for the game, believing this concept is the starting point for an ethical approach to sports education. There has been consistent inability in research to define and effectively utilize concepts of fair play, sportsmanship, morals, character, and ethical conduct (Palaez, 2010). According to Lumpkin *et al* (1994), moral reasoning within sports involves three elements: moral character, moral valuing, and moral acting, requiring impartiality, consistency, and reflective judgment'. A more recent study outlines three different but related views of the term sportsmanship.

1. A form of social union
2. A means in the promotion of pleasure,
3. As a form of altruism (Arnold 2003).

Arnold (2003) defines sportsmanship in the altruistic perception of the term as a sacrifice of an individual's who goes beyond what is required by duty or a proper observance of the rules namely that these acts have moral value and they are not morally obligatory. Holowchak (2001; 2002) viewed sportsmanship as a cultural phenomenon and contextualizes the term relative to the Greek idea of moral and physical excellence: *arête*, He calls this athleticism which implies hardship and commitment to winning'. He elaborates further on this idea by stating that the commitment to winning is combined with the manner of virtuous fair play in which victory is achieved. He emphasizes the Greek view that action is judged virtuous because it is performed by a virtuous person,' claiming that this idea is still a prevalent undercurrent in modern society.

Concept of Integrity in Sport:

The concept of the word Integrity in:teg·ri·ty (in-těg'ri-tē) comes from Latin word, 'Enteros', derives from *integer*, Latin for 'entire.' which means "whole" Integrity is what makes a man whole, what makes him a full person, someone who can act with honesty, who can see the difference in between, right and wrong, who has the courage to act upon the right decision, person who knows the exact meaning of the word "Moral" (*John; Condit; Caudill 1999; El-Shaddai, 2000*). In this context, integrity is the inner sense of "wholeness" deriving from qualities such as honesty and consistency of character. 'Which means "whole"? Integrity according to Mason '(2001), *Integrity is the integration of outward actions and inner values as a person with integrity does what they say they will do in accordance with their values, beliefs and principles. A person of integrity can be trusted because he or she never veers from inner values, even when it might be expeditious to do so. A key to integrity, therefore, is consistency of actions that are viewed as honest and truthful to inner values, which is a form of self-consciousness within the individual through focusing on the self as described by Teehan (1995). Integrity is a word commonly associated with modern day sports, it is a complex term that takes on different meanings in different environments and contexts. Teehan, (1995) defines integrity as "the result of unity between a person's actions and his or her moral image, where individuals must consider the consequences of their behaviors and actions, both for themselves and their communities, and for both the short and long term".*

There are two categories of moral image or character which are:

- Social (honesty, fairness, and compassion)
- Moral (social character under competing societal pressures and temptations'

Sport transcends cultures, religions and beliefs. Sport is a meeting place for cohesion, integration and education, supporting physical and mental accomplishment; there is no other human activity that has such potential to unite people and peoples. While integrity in sport relies on the authenticity of the outcome of sporting competitions that are entirely and exclusively based on the merits of the competitors involved. Integrity constitutes the essence of sport, as well as the authenticity seal and ultimate guardian of its innate values. Today, sport faces a plethora of challenges such as match fixing, corruption and doping to its integrity that, in their scope, dynamics and consequences, threaten its commercial and public appeal. Integrity is a multi-faceted principle. It evokes entirety, wholeness, purity, indivisibility, consistency, sincerity and tolerance.

Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness; in sports it refers to: the quality of being honest and fair : the state of being complete or whole, related to integrity are Synonyms of character, decency, goodness, honesty, morality, probity, rectitude, righteousness, rightness, uprightness, virtue, virtuousness. Ethics of Integrity according to Mason '(2001), is a form of self-consciousness within the individual, through focusing on the self and for a self-consciousness of one's own identity and role in society relative to both the dominant prevailing culture and individuals outside one's social position. The virtue of integrity is an inclusive state of being whereby an awareness of and tolerance towards others prevails in our intentions and actions: a rejection of racism, sexism, and any antipathy towards another. It is what Gould & Carson (2008) would call an internal asset. Mason defines integrity as having two aspects which work in tandem:

1. the principal of the respect for the dignity of each other's being'
2. Taking responsibility for our moral decisions'(Mason, 2001).

McNamee, (2009) define integrity as having three elements equity, responsibility, and respect and that these constitute a system of ethics applicable to both organizations and institutions. Shields & Bredemeier (1995) as scholars interested in the relationship between philosophy and sport attempt to demarcate integrity from the ambiguous term of sportsmanship, stating. The virtue of integrity is the cornerstone of character, for it is the embodiment of our ideals'. They argue that sportsmanship is the outcome of moral action, whereas integrity is the *intention of the individual* to act in a sportsperson-like way, regardless of how their actions will be received by their fans, peers, coaches or officials. Related to integrity is the concept of good character. Doty, (2006) define character as the sum of a person's moral qualities'; the courage to act in accordance to one's convictions; and the possession of a range of virtues which one willingly acts upon both in their own long term interests as well in the interests of others' but noted that one cannot empirically discern it, further canvasses a range of interpretations: an internal state that is manifested in behavior'; (Doty 2006) ultimately concludes that character building is a lifelong holistic process that is primarily influenced by contextual variables throughout a person's life.

Rudd & Mondello (2006), describes two categories for character: social (honesty, fairness, and compassion) and moral (social character under competing societal pressures and temptations) coaches over emphasized social character over moral character which contributes to the ethical problems in sports

Integrity issues in Sports

Sport not only reflects a society's ethical standards but also contains its own moral qualities that influence societal structures and institutions. Corruption, doping and match-fixing damage public perceptions of the integrity of sport as an arena for competition, from grass-roots competitions to international mega-events; corruption and athletes transgressing the ideals of fair play gives the public a cause for concern as to the validity of competition, fair play and enforcement. Proving that officials accepted kickbacks, athletes used banned substances or matches were fixed can have a dramatic effect on the public's opinion of sport. Such findings call into question every aspect of the sporting relationship, from the highest levels of governing organizations all the way to individual athletes. Corrupt practices are therefore parasitic, because they undermine and destroy the ideals of fair play ideals are integral to the continued success and growth of sport. The overemphasis on winning, seeking prestige or financial rewards, and persistent social discrimination such as racism and sexism are perhaps some main reasons for many instances of misconduct by individuals (Atkin, 1998).

Five integrity issues within the domains of sport in which the moral infractions took place: bending the rules, cheating, coach aggression, disrespect, and player aggression; the integrity obligations of sports managers, coaches, governing bodies and sports organizations as well as the off-field conduct of players. Sports participants in the third sector, families and spectators, its relevance to ethics and integrity is limited with increased commercialization spectators have modified their attitudes to sport, becoming less concerned with aesthetics and skills and more concerned with heroism, daring and spectacle. athletes being pushed too hard by coaches, spectators were more likely to consider the hostile aggressive if they were functional; that is, if they increased their team's chances of sporting success. Lack of practical understanding of sportsmanship and difference between gamesmanship and sportsmanship is only partially responsible for spectator aggression. Winning at all costs mentality was often displayed by parents of athletes, which was particularly worrying at junior levels where players were likely to adopt these behaviors. Violent and aggressive behaviors are encouraged and rewarded in collision sports, particularly where such behaviors were seen to increase the probability of winning

Other Integrity Issues impacting most negatively on sport (for those already involved) are: going beyond the spirit of the game, verbal abuse, negative coaching behaviors and practices, athletes being pushed too hard by coaches or parents, negative administrative behaviors and practices and negative officiating behaviors and practices (ASC 2010a). Negative coaching behaviors and practices have been identified as having a significant impact on sports. Integrity issues in relation to both on-field and off-field practices and attitudes of elite athletes, the widespread occurrence of a winning at all costs mentality across various levels, age-groups and codes. Integrity differs across different sporting levels and age groups. In relation to player poaching, for example, despite the welfare of athletes being a major consideration in all sporting environments, poaching and inducements at junior levels in sport should be discouraged or, failing that, regulated by the sport's governing body However, sports managers consider a sponsor strategy of embracement, arguing that scandal is inevitable in elite sport and does not necessarily adversely affect sponsorship. Sport integrity is shown from the research to differ across various sporting environments, particularly between amateur and elite or professional sport. Extrinsic motivations that are increasingly present at elite levels *suggest* problems for sport integrity, Understanding and valuing of sportsmanship; players/spectators felt it was acceptable to engage in abusive cheering and distracting the opposition and felt that this behavior was an aspect of their role as spectators and

supporters of their team. McNamee, (2009) views little difference in ethics and integrity across different sporting codes, players blur the lines between breaking and bending the rules, this is now a common practice that stems from the high value society gives to winning and is reflected in modern sports both amateur and professional. Upton (2011) examines whether to cheat or not to cheat is a *genuine* moral dilemma by exploring if there are overriding moral reasons to cheat or in the author's terms a moral duty to cheat. Evidence was found that given it is a player's duty to assist the team to victory, there are cases where participants considered cheating as a part of the game and, therefore, morally acceptable.

What Role Does Integrity Play in Sports?

There are five primary rationales for integrity in competitive sports:

1. for sports managers, officials and coaches to serve sports in the best interest of those that they represent;
2. for the athlete, the discipline and values of sports can contribute to personal development reinforcing performance excellence;
3. for the sports environment the ceremonies and competition of sports can contribute to proliferation of sports participants and loyalty;
4. For the age group/sporting level, sports can broaden positive interest in and public support for sponsorship.
5. For Sporting institutions the ability to provide check and balance recurrence of scandals taking place in a certain number of competitions provides a preview of the magnitude of the phenomenon and preoccupying public opinion and competent authorities beyond the sporting world.

Integrity is important in competitive sports for sports managers, officials, coaches and players/athletes serve sports diligently and in the best interest of those that they serve, because some are chosen, others appointed, or elected to serve sports and the society. In order to be able to serve, sports managers, coaches and officiating officials are given power in their positions to make, execute, or control policy. They have the power to influence something or someone. There is, however, a risk that this power will not be used by these sports bureaucrats to serve sports and the society. It is important that sports managers, organizers and coaches withstand this temptation, and that requires integrity. Proios, Athanailidis, & Arvanitidou, (2009) states that integrity starts with that sport manager, coach, organizers and officiating official should know what their position entails, because integrity is related to their position. Integrity also demands knowledge and compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the written and unwritten rules. Integrity is also acting consistently not only with what is generally accepted as moral, what others think, but primarily with what is ethical, what sports manager, coach, organizers and officiating official should do based on reasonable arguments *Zaffron, (2010)*. Furthermore, integrity is not just about why a coach or officiating official acts in a certain way, but also about whom the coach or officiating official is. Questions about a person's integrity cast doubt not only on their intentions but also on the source of those intentions, the person's character. So integrity is about having the right ethical virtues that become visible in a pattern of sports behavior; important virtues of sports managers, coaches and officiating officials are faithfulness, humility (Proios, Athanailidis, & Arvanitidou, 2009). Furthermore, they should be authentic, accountable and a role model. Van Minden & Jack (2010) identified pride (*megalopsuchia*), variously translated as proper pride, greatness of soul and magnanimity, as the crown of the virtues, distinguishing it from vanity, temperance, and humility. Gamesmanship is built on the principle that winning is everything? Athletes and coaches are encouraged to bend the rules wherever possible in order to gain a competitive advantage over an opponent, and to pay less attention to the safety and welfare of the competition. Some of the key tenants of gamesmanship are:

- Winning is everything
 - It's only cheating if you get caught
 - It is the referee's job to catch wrongdoing, and the athletes and coaches have no inherent responsibility to follow the rules
 - The ends always justify the means
- Some examples of gamesmanship are:
- Faking a foul or injury
 - Attempting to get a head start in a race
 - Tampering with equipment, such as corking a baseball bat in order to hit the ball farther
 - Covert personal fouls, such as grabbing a player underwater during a water polo match
 - Inflicting pain on an opponent with the intention of knocking him or her out of the game, like the Saint's bounty scandal
 - The use of performance-enhancing drugs
 - Taunting or intimidating an opponent
 - A coach lying about an athlete's grades in order to keep him or her eligible to play

All of these examples place greater emphasis on the outcome of the game than on the manner in which it is played. A more ethical/integrity approach to competitive sports is sportsmanship. Sportsmanship: In the

altruistic perception of the term is a sacrifice of an individual who goes beyond what is required by duty or a proper observance of the rules namely that these acts have moral value and they are not morally obligatory'. Under sportsmanship, healthy competition is seen as a means of cultivating personal honor, virtue, and character. It contributes to a community of respect and trust between competitors and in society. The goal in sportsmanship is not simply to win, but to pursue victory with honor by giving one's best effort. Arnold, (2003), sees sportsmanship in the altruistic perception of the term as a sacrifice of an individual who goes beyond what is required by duty or a proper observance of the rules namely that these acts have moral value and they are not morally obligatory'. Lumpkin *et al* (2003) viewed sportsmanship by contrasting the concept with an opposite: gamesmanship. In turn, the authors define gamesmanship as pushing the rules to the limit without getting caught, using whatever dubious methods possible to achieve the desired end'.

Sportsmanship is bringing your best to all competitions. During athletic events there are five roles being played out, which are:

The responsibility of the coach to teach, the athlete to perform,

The officials to govern the contest,

The spectators to cheer and

The athletic director to conduct event management

II. Conclusion and Recommendations

- It is clear that integrity and sports presents unique challenges for players, spectators, coaches, sports managers, governing bodies and sports Association because of the organizational pressures involved in the organization and management of sport competitions
- Match fixing, corruption and doping damage public perceptions of the integrity of sport as an arena for competition, from grass-roots competitions to international mega-events. This is alarming, particularly because international sporting institutions increasingly face allegations of corruption.
- A coordinated prevention strategy for protecting the integrity of all sports is vital, and must involve a wide range of stakeholders on national, regional and global levels, through collaboration with sports organizations to develop education and prevention programmes that provide practical advice to everybody involved in sports and raise awareness about the risks that match-fixing presents to the livelihoods and safety of those involved and the reputation of the 'beautiful game'.
- New laws, rules and government frameworks on drugs, doping and match-fixing have been established, improved governance standards have been enforced to protect against corruption and inequity, and sporting organizations have implemented policies, programs, codes and education to address player, parent, coach, official and administrator conduct.
- Participation in sport should be based upon the concepts of fairness, sportsmanship, respect, responsibility and safety.
- There are a number of 'threats' posed to the integrity of sport, including match fixing, results manipulation, doping, corruption and unethical behavior.
- Rules, codes of conduct, good governance principles, monitoring and sanctions are important deterrence and accountability measures and to preserve peoples' rights and responsibilities in sport.
- Informed and ethical decision making is a key element in ensuring sports and participants maintain integrity in their choices and actions.

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