

The key issues facing high profile sports people and the ethical responsibilities that they have to the community at large

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Abstract: *Sports and games impart a sense of discipline, fellow-sportsmanship and togetherness and it is a daily requirement to improve both physical and mental skills of society. In considering recent years, competitiveness of the sport field has been increased rapidly due to reasons of power, highest revenue and prestige. Therefore, most athletes who are performing professionally have inspired to enhance their performance in the unethical manner. Consequently, it creates considerable key issues for society in many ways. Nevertheless, high profile sports people have ethical responsibilities to engage with their particular sports in proper manner. Therefore, this article explained the key issues of society that are facing high profile sports people and ensure what are the ethical responsibilities of sportspersons.*

Sport can be defined as all forms of physical activities that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. "Sports has the power to change the world, the power to inspire, and the power to unite people in a way that little else can...[S]port can create hope... [I]t is an instrument for peace" (Nelson Mandela, 1993 as cited in Keim, 2012, p.9). It is a grass root initiative to develop attitudes in people to build better social interaction as well as the unity of society. High profile sports people, those who are engaging with the competitive sports in a professional context, are one of the role model to improve social cohesion through the sports. In fact, these characters should have ethical responsibilities to buildup universal values for the better society through their profession. In present context, there are key issues of high profile sports people which has been identified as a reason of competitiveness of professional sports. In addition due to reasons of money oriented sports arena, most of professional athletes have stimulated to enhance their performance in unethical way. However, these issues are distressing negatively for athlete's physical and psychological condition creating fetal situations. This research will discuss the key issues facing high profile sports people and discuss what are the ethical responsibilities to the community at large.

In recent years there has been growing concern about the key issues which are affected to high profile sports people today. This concern is typically focused on ethical issues that are exacerbated by high profile sports people, during, before and after competition. These issues can be divided in two main classifications such as physical and physiological issues. Physical issues are mainly based on health risks such as doping, eating disorder and injuries. Murphy and Waddington (2007) argue that "elite athletes take, and are expected to take, serious risks with their health from doping" (p. 249). However, after the World War II it became clear that many elite athletes in a wide range of sports were using drugs to speed up development during their training and to enhance their performance in competition. Salasuo and Piispa (2012) point out that "doping has usually been observed from the medical perspective fitness doping is viewed first and foremost as a health problem. [In addition] doping outside elite sports is an exceptional and challenging social phenomenon" (p.27). In fact there are various methods that used by high profile sports people to enhanced their performance such as blood doping, gene doping and steroids. Özdemir, Nur, Bagecivan, Bulut, Sümer, & Tezeren (2005) describe that "Particular attention should be paid to the younger population, who may suffer the most from the health problems caused by doping use" (p. 251). In this context, there are several doping incidents which are influence to death cases of elite athletes who have been identified from many countries and it will harm both individual life as well as common society.

Moreover, eating disorders which are the serious and common psychiatric conditions such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are other physical issues that facing high profile sports people today. Currie (2010, pp. 63-68) explain that "Eating disorders are common and potentially serious conditions which affect both health and sporting performance". Especially, there is strong relationship with eating disorders weight sensitive sports. The main reason is athletes who are engaging with weight sensitive sports should control their body weight according to the situation that they going to compete. In this context athletes are using inappropriate diet either reduce or increase their body weight. Therefore most of elite athletes facing health risks due to consequences of bad eating patterns. Some elite athletes have been addicted to these bad eating patterns but unfortunately, most of cases they have been encountered serious and pathetic situations in their lives.

Some sports injuries regarding with the over use of body parts are one of the detrimental and growing problems for high profile sports people today. According to the Brenner (2007) explains that:

“Overuse injury is micro traumatic damage to a bone, muscle, or tendon that has been subjected to repetitive stress without sufficient time to heal or undergo the natural reparative process. However, injuries tend to be more common during peak growth velocity, and some are more likely to occur if underlying biomechanical problems are present” (p. 1243).

In this context overuse injury is the serious issue which is negatively affecting for sports performance as well as general health with long term consequences. In considering present world, most athletes who engage with sports previously are facing considerable long term injuries due to reason of over practice.

In addition to the above problem, most researchers have been determined that aggressive behavior is one of key physiological issue that facing high profile sports people today. Sport is one of the key determinant factor to balance the human body as well as the mind. In fact athletes should improve their aggression behavior as a strategy of the competition in some particular sports. Mărășescu (2014) explains that

“interpersonal aggressive behavior in sports combined with violence among men who participate in contact and team sports, the effects of power sports participation on antisocial behavior, the processes underlying sports aggression, and youth sports’ possible influences on antisocial and prosocial behavior” (p.98).

It is true that some specific sports use aggressive behavior during competition according their purpose. However this situation badly affects athlete’s mental wellbeing. On the other hand, some children are imitating these characters and their actions which relevant with aggressive behavior for their day to day life and it will negatively effects for those children.

“Gamesmanship is built on the principle that winning is everything” (Hanson & Savage, 2012). Sportsmanship is the opposite concept of gamesmanship and Hanson & Savage (2012) explain that, it is basic concept of sport which is understand the connection between sportsmanship and gamesmanship. Furthermore, that particular understanding can create ethical behavior of athletes in the competition. In addition, the ethical responsibilities in sports, mainly based on attitudes and behavior of sportsmanship. Sport is a one of the key strategies to overcome social issues and it has the potential positive impact for community in society. In this context there are ethical responsibilities that high profile sports people have to consider in their profession to encourage the community for better the world. Davies (as cited in Smith & Westerbeek, 2007) “high-profile role for sport in tackling global and community challenges of health, peace development and ethics” (p.49). Therefore, sport has become a powerful communicator for spreading out ethical messages for society through high profile sports people today.

Hanson & Savage (2012) point out Sportsmanship is the model to encourage character development in sports and it can communicate wide concept to society in a good manner. For instance sport can develop the healthy and peaceful society through physical activities and mega events. Therefore, high profile sports people are the characters that behave as a role model for community in an effective way for social mobilization. In addition, high profile sports people can emulate both participants and spectators of sports to positive involvement. White (as cited in Smith & Westerbeek, 2007) explain that “children are tend to improve their self-esteem, advances of good citizenship, fosters the value of mastery and cooperation, and encourages a physically active life style” through role models in sports (p.50). In fact athletes can help to develop the healthy society through their roles and athletes have the responsibility to communicate the value of sport for the community in an ethical manner.

In addition to the role model, high profile sports peoples should respect the basic values of sports which are recommended from both ancient and modern Olympic Games. According to the international Olympic committee, Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. According to the Simon (2007) “sports values can express simply mirror, reflect or reinforce to other values found in wider society” (p.35). Moreover sports can “emphasize capitalize values” (p.35) in society through performance of high profile sports people . Moreover these moral values are not only beneficial for sports people but also beneficial for the whole world to make the better society. Due to this reason, high profile sports people should respect values in sports as one of ethical responsibility of them.

Moreover, fair play which is following rules and regulations in the game is another important ethical responsibility that every athlete should consider during their competition. On the other hand, the way of engage with sport competition is a form of language for the communicate real meaning of the sports. In this context, athletes can present the main objectives of sports through competition for society. According to Butcher and Schneider (2007) “respect of the game is a rich and powerful conception of fair play” (p. 137). In addition it is the readymade solution to the issues of fair play such as doping and cheating. Fair play which is relevant with moral and psychological is intrinsic motivation for society who engage to sports. Butcher and Schneider (2007) describe “it is an attempt to ground the treatment of actual sporting concerns and issues on philosophically sound foundation” (p.138). In considering today, many high profile athletes are taking drugs to enhance their performance and some are facing the negative consequences of drugs. In this context, they are cheating the competitions because of prestige, global power and money, but this is not what they should do for good sportsmanship. Therefore all athletes have the ethical responsibility to compete under the rules and regulation of the sport.

Sexual equality and respect of gender differences in sport can point out as a debatable issues today. Sex and gender are two different concepts both biologically and sociologically. Therefore athletes should behave in an understanding manner with both sexes and gender roles. In considering gender roles perpetuated by sport that are harmful to women both outside and in the athletic arena. Howe (2007) points out:

“Sports as we humans play them, are never simply a serious of purely physical motions of the body. Rather they are complex normative structures of social interaction that effectively define, embody and enforce the socially appropriate limits of human being and behavior” (pp. 331-332).

In addition Howe (2007) explains that women have to face some problematic situation in sports because of traditional concepts. However, everyone has the same rights to be involve in sport both active and passive. In this context, high profile sports people can change these traditional minds which society is believe and reduce the sexual discrimination through sports effectively.

In addition to the above ethical responsibilities, peace building through sport is important and compulsory requirement of society today. Sport has power to gather community for a common symbol. For instance, the Olympic Games, World cricket cup, Commonwealth Games and Tour de France are popular mega events which gather community for one purpose actively and passively. Most countries make efforts to build relationships with other countries through hosting these mega events. According to Keim (2012) explain “sport can assist the social creation” (p.14) and sport can build peace in various activities through changing the attitudes of people. In fact, high profile sports people can promote peace effectively than other participants in sport. As Nelson Mandela explained, they can play against the racial differences and social violence through their role modeling in the sport.

It is clear that, high profile sports people have to incorporate with the particular ethical responsibilities in a proper manner to illustrate the meaning of sports for community. Even though, due to reason of professionalism and the nature of competitiveness, high profile sports people creates considerable key social issues for sports field through unscrupulous ways which are relevant with performance enhancing drugs, gene doping, inappropriate eating patterns and unwanted aggression behavior. Moreover, this situation has been created negative impacts for both athletes as well as society rather that positive impacts. In considering this situation, high profile sports people have the ethical responsibility to overcome these issues in many ways. Therefore this research has elaborated the key issues that encountering high profile sports people and ethical responsibilities what they have to do for the society through their sportsmanship. According to the above factors high profile sports people are the key characters of the sports field and they are the people who should motivate the society for betterment of the world through sports. Therefore high profile sports people should develop their sportsmanship rather than gamesmanship in the field and they should engage with sports as their responsibility of professional life. After that society can understand the real meaning of sports. In addition society can understand how people can achieve physical and social benefits from sports to their lives. Moreover these particular high profile sports people can creates global sports society through their profession and it will help to increase peaceful and healthy society. Finally, if high profile sports people behave as an ethical way to intensification social cohesion that will be the true winning goal of their professional life as well as personal life.

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