

British Philosophy of Sports Association

# The 21st Annual Conference of the British Philosophy of Sports Association

hosted by Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen, Scotland,  
21-23rd March, 2024

**Book of Abstracts**

British  
Philosophy *of*  
Sport  
Association



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## Book of Abstracts

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## Effort: It is not about how hard you can hit.

### Abstract

Can our life really be based on the joy of effort, as the Olympic Charter suggests? There is a certain paradox in our approach to effort: On one side we might be programmed to avoid it; on the other, we learn to value it (Inzlicht et al., 2018). In the context of sport, we praise effort, but we prize effortlessness (Gail Montero, 2016). In this paper I will examine current definitions of effort in the context of sport. This will shed some light on the general idea of a life based on the joy of effort.

I will pay attention to the well-worn distinction between intellectual and physical effort (Dewey, 1897). I will argue that this dualistic account is wrong about separating these two kinds of effort into two unrelated phenomena. Such division limits our insights into the value of effort and its phenomenological meaning (Loland, 2012). By contrast, what we need is a unified definition of effort that will grasp the totality of the experience of an agent performing a difficult sporting action. This idea relates to the recently published ‘single-feeling view’ (Bermúdez, 2023). I claim that, if we acknowledge the relevant facts such as that effort always requires overcoming obstacles between the aims and intentions (Savage, 2016), or that physical exercise influences our cognitive abilities (Brisswalter et al., 2002) we can find a common denominator for all instances of effort in sport.

In sport sciences “perception of effort” refers to the conscious sensation of how hard, heavy, and strenuous a physical task is. Other terms, such as perceived exertion are used interchangeably with “sensation of effort”. In my paper I suggest some conceptual arrangements to avoid confusion when talking about effort in sport and to give justice to the complexity of this feeling that is not exclusively dependent on corporeal factors.

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## Life Outside the Diamond is a Wrench: On Losing One’s Talents

### Abstract

Many elite athletes find the loss of their athletic abilities due to age or injury to be a profoundly challenging experience. While talent *development* is a well-studied phenomenon both within sports science and coaching (Sherwin et al 2017; Baker et al 2012) and also within the philosophy of sport (Aggerholm 2014; Bailey 2007), far less attention has been paid to the issue of talent *loss*. This paper aims to address this gap by exploring the experience and challenges faced by elite athletes who are losing, or who have lost, their talent.

We start by briefly explaining our understanding of talent as a disposition, which builds on the work of Aggerholm (2015) and Robb (2021). Then, by drawing on phenomenological accounts of embodiment as applied in the philosophy of disability, we argue that the experience of talent loss is constituted by three distinct yet interrelated challenges.

- First is the alteration and disorientation of the bodily self that arises from losing the ability to successfully perform intentional actions (Carel 2016).
- Second is the challenge to one’s self-conception that arises from experiencing the absence of one’s former talent as a talent that ‘has-been’ (see Sartre 1943).
- Third is the challenge that arises from significant changes in one’s social relationships and environment more generally (for example Silvers 2018).

We argue that this phenomenological account of talent loss also highlights significant normative implications for how both athletes and those in contact with athletes ought to respond to these challenges. Although talent loss can be disorienting, upsetting and unpleasant, it may also play a valuable role in allowing people to reassess their identity, norms, habits and values (Harbin 2016). For disorientation to play this role, though, it is important that athletes do not seek to reorientate themselves too quickly, and that others give them the space to be disorientated.

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## Re-thinking institutional relationship: lessons learned from the Western Balkans

### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to address the issue of needed re-organization and restructuring of governance of contemporary not-for-profit sports organizations. It problematizes the position of stakeholders excluded from the decision-making processes, as well as the problem of bureaucratization and undemocratic structural problems. The question of legitimacy and democratization on the one hand, and the persistence of oligarchic structures and the challenges they pose on the other hand, have been addressed mirroring social and political issues of the society as a whole.

Understanding the issues of hierarchical, pyramidal structure, accumulated privileges, and concentration of power, is crucial, referring to Rousseau's analysis of the relationship between power and the legitimacy of its use. The fact that these relations remained unchanged, regardless of the degree of lucrativeness, in both professional and not-for-profit organizations, is particularly indicative. This paper offers a potential solution to the problem of accumulation of power, centralization, and deprivation of the right to decide for the institutionally excluded stakeholders. The concept of self-management with its key ingredients – participation, and representation as a prerequisite for reaching needed consensus, has been highlighted as a way to reconcile contradictions associated with current institutional arrangements.

**Keywords:** Sport organizations; democracy; governance; representation; decision-making

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## Sport and the Second-Person Standpoint

### Abstract

I argue that the wrong of cheating in sport is not best construed in terms of something like an objectively specifiable 'lusory duty' to obey the rules but rather as the violation of a second-personal directed duty with respect to other players. Directed duties and rights essentially involve second-personal relations and "thought that is addressed to, and makes a claim on" (Darwall 2006, p. 6) another person.

The theoretical resources of what Stephen Darwall calls 'the second person standpoint' best explain the strong affective reactions of sportspeople to perceived wrongs and the difference between run-of-the-mill rule violations and more strongly deplorable acts of cheating. We can most clearly appreciate the importance of second personal relations of understanding and trust in sustaining our competitive interactions in situations where this crucial scaffolding breaks down.

For this reason, I will explore these issues via a case study: the infamous biting incident in the 1997 heavyweight championship bout between Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield.

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**Alistair Brown**

## **Is there a right to die or be seriously injured while playing sport?**

### **Acceptable risk in sport**

#### **Abstract**

In recent years an ice hockey player died when his neck was slashed by an opponent's skate, the Isle of Man TT road race had a death toll of six, and American Football's governing body paid millions of dollars in compensation to former players now suffering with dementia. Sport can be dangerous.

Consequently, several sports bodies have increased safety measures. For example, rugby has new laws lowering the legal tackle height in community games (England Rugby, 2023). And, since 1950, Grand Prix racing (now Formula 1) has implemented over 80 safety regulations

I will ask: to what extent should sportspeople be free to accept risks associated with their sport? And, what exactly would it mean for a sport to be 'safe enough'?

There are two important philosophical problems. One relates to **the sportsperson's autonomy**. J.S. Mill wrote: "Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign" (1859, p.22). The argument is that, if sportspeople are competent to understand their risks, others should not limit their participation. However, the competitor may be pressured by others (team members, coaches, investors), thus compromising their autonomy.

The second issue concerns **the limits of acceptable risk in sport**. The World Rugby Chairman has said their mission is to make rugby as safe as possible. We rarely make anything that safe. Walls are not built to separate cars from pedestrians. Nor will rugby eliminate tackling or rucks. So when is rugby, football, boxing, or F1 racing safe enough? Where might risk-limits be fixed? Using Adams' (1995) theory of balancing risks against potential rewards, this paper will address the above questions of acceptable risk in sport.

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**Tony Cain**

## **Value at The Isle of Man Tourist Trophy (TT) Motorcycle Road Races.**

#### **Abstract**

The Isle of Man, a self-governing offshore Crown Dependency, and styled "The Road Racing Capital of The World" annually hosts The Tourist Trophy (TT Races). The event, attracting over 40,000 spectators to the Island, takes place on a circuit comprising c. 38 miles of public roads, and closed for racing purposes. Widely regarded as the world's most dangerous circuit, it has witnessed c.155 competitor fatalities (Duncan 2022). Due to its high risk factor the TT has generated emotive and polarised thinking, with calls for it to be banned (Visordown 2010, Duncan 2022, Hunt 2022). The TT, with its inherent likelihood of participant death or serious injury, seems almost an outlier in our modern, risk-averse, safety-conscious society. Whilst there has been an analysis of TT Races from various perspectives, there is a paucity of academic enquiry relating to wider philosophical aspects of the TT.

Rather than viewing risk taking as the ultimate attraction, this paper will argue that competitors may seek alternative values in their TT road racing experience. This assertion is considered via several theoretical frameworks – for example, psychologically, 'transcendentalism' (Celsi 1992); socio-psychologically, 'edgework' (Lyng 1990) and philosophically, 'self-affirmation' (Russell, 2005), 'the sublime' (Ilundain-Agurruza 2007) and 'selflessness' (Martinkova & Hsu 2009). As such, this paper will consider the values that may be inherent in the high-stakes and risky activity that is the Isle of Man TT Races.

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## What principles should coaches abide by?

### Abstract

Medical interventions are commonly understood as regulated by well-accepted principles of medical ethics and bioethics, such as autonomy and beneficence. Those principles are often labeled as part of the ethical framework for healthcare sciences developed by Beauchamp and Childress (2019). Although it is not uncommon for sport coaches to have backgrounds in health-related fields, such as psychology, physiotherapy, or sports sciences –many coaches have no professional background. Indeed, many have often limited licences and education or training for sport coaching. It is, therefore, unclear whether those principles are appropriate and desirable, nor what are (or should be) the ethical frameworks informing the professional training of sport coaches.

Such a scenario leads to unclarity as to which, if any, ethical frameworks coaches should follow or be regulated by. For example, healthcare personnel are supposed to follow medical ethics and bioethical principles when facing situations where their goal is to offer treatment to their patients, as opposed to optimising athletic performance. Moreover, there is no authoritative guidance as to when coaches' conduct strays into health-related decision-making.

Since the translation of Beauchamp and Childress' principlism to coaching has not yet been addressed, this research aims to analyze the desirability and appropriateness of medical ethics and bioethics principles for sports coaches. Moreover, we expand principlism's quadratic model by focusing on the power relations, mutual respect, and trust surrounding the coaching situation.

**Key-words:** coaching, bioethics, principlism

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## The Fairness of AI Neuroenhancement in Sport. Some ethical issues at play

### Abstract

The rapid development of neurotech devices, and in particular brain-computer interfaces (BCIs), may have a major impact on sport. Brain neuro-enhancement through AI-driven devices seems to be the latest trend in sports enhancement. BCIs are designed to restore motor function problems. These devices can detect neural activity associated with an intended movement, allowing people to control external devices, such as a prosthetic limb that acts as part of the human body. Indeed, BCIs have also been described as devices that translate thoughts into actions (Bates, 2018).

BCIs are already being used in sport to monitor brain activity to assess an athlete's mental state, such as concentration, fatigue and stress. They can also provide real-time feedback to athletes and coaches. In short, they have a wide range of applications in sport, improving technique, performance and focus. These devices already play an important role in sport and are used by professional athletes (Edwards et al, 2017), as well as in non-professional sport.

The rapid technological improvements made possible by neuroscience and AI in sport will, in the near future, allow the brain, body and psychology of athletes to merge. The increasing use of BCIs in sport has raised several ethical questions and interesting debates (Carrio and Perez Triviño, 2017). An important concern is whether the use of BCIs should be included as doping by WADA (Pugh & Pugh, 2021) due to their enhancement potential. However, their use in sport also raises questions about the boundaries of sport medicine and psychology, since not being used to repair something, but to enhance human performance in sport.

In this paper I will first examine the ethical implications of the use of AI brain enhancement devices in sport in terms of fairness, equality and the principles of bioethics. Then, I will argue that WADA should include this type of neuroenhancement as a prohibited method according to the standard criteria of anti-doping policies.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, brain neuroenhancement, fairness, sport ethics, doping.

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## Agostino Cera

### Running as a Religious Experience. Between Philosophy of Sport and Philosophy of Technology

#### Abstract

My presentation consists of a *dialogue between philosophy of technology and philosophy of sport*. The newest evolution of running, its definitive metamorphosis into a performance activity, will allow me to emphasize the current totalitarian drive of technology.

I will develop my argument through *three stages*. The *first stage* deals with *Albert Borgmann's philosophy of technology*. Borgmann introduces the concept of the *device paradigm* and that of the *focal points*, the latter being understood as enclaves of resistance against technology as a planetary force. According to Borgmann long-distance running represented one of these focal points.

To counter Borgmann's thesis, in the *second stage* of my argument I will present the *Vienna Experiment*, namely that on October 12, 2019 *Eliud Kipchoge* became the first human being to run the marathon in under two hours. This "historical sport event" proves that the device paradigm has also conquered running as an enclave of focality, because it establishes the anthropological metamorphosis of the runner into a *human device*.

In the *third stage* I mention a counter-example: the story of *Eric Liddell*, i.e. the idea of *running as a religious experience*. Liddell, "The Flying Scotsman", was Olympic 400m gold medalist, Paris 1924 (his story was told in the movie *Chariots of Fire*). He never competed on Sunday, because it is the "the Lord's day". I choose this example to show that the "focality" evoked by Borgmann against the advancing of the device paradigm has something essential to do with religion as a *practice of sacralization*. Against technology as a planetary force, we should try a "re-enchantment of the world". Beyond its confessional dimension, i.e. as a practice of sacralization, religion proves to be a highly focal practice. A total experience.

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## Michael Cheng

### Rowing through the AI age: what sports reveal about the future of human work

#### Abstract

As AI becomes more capable of replicating human intellectual work, the salience of sport in human life is set to increase. AI is unable to outright replace human athletes because the core nature of sport is that sport involves human participants who attempt to maximize their physical potential while abiding by an "invisible contract" of constraints that limit their efficiency. As part of this "invisible contract," human athletes develop camaraderie, tradition, emotional bonds, and physical prowess that cannot be replicated by AI. The goal of sport is to display humanity, not maximize efficiency. Otherwise, we would be more enthralled by cheetahs than human runners.

By philosophically analyzing what makes sport uniquely human, we can better understand how human employment might change in the AI age. In particular, I argue that lines of work that depend on deep, long-standing human relationships and an adherence to rules that generate uniquely human values are relatively AI-proof, for similar reasons that sport is relatively AI-proof. Areas of work where deep human relationships and adherence to an "invisible contract" that generates camaraderie and tradition are less likely to be automated by AI. For instance, diplomats, high-level executives, and athletes all have relatively AI-proof careers. Overall, this paper demonstrates how the philosophy of sport can provide real-world insights for the age of AI.

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## The Fandom Paradox

### Abstract

Much has been written about watching sport in the recent philosophy of sport. (See, for instance, Mumford, 2012; Brady, 2019; Archer, 2021). A paradox of many partisan fans has not been treated:

1. At all points during a contest – matches and competitions – the partisan wants happenings (e.g., more goals or points) that will further the likelihood of victory.
2. Many partisan fans relish the prospect of a fierce contest or retrospect fondly upon a fierce contest.
3. To be practically rational, if one relishes or wants something at time  $t$  or retrospectively relishes that something at time  $t+2$ , then one should want at time  $t+1$  the conditions of bringing about that something.

Can practical irrationality be avoided? Two frameworks are invoked together. Kretchmar (2015) argues that different sites of value in sport participation speak to our human nature. The same applies to watching sport. We are creatures who want to avoid and to succeed, and who embrace pain in the strivings. We are creatures who reinterpret. We want to avoid opposition scores at  $t+1$ . We want more goals or points at  $t+1$ . Sport fandom celebrates the hoping-to-avoid and to succeed *themselves*. It affirms the pain involved (Brady, 2019).

The second framework is that of Hegel, for whom the purpose of history can be understood only retrospectively. A contest can be fully interpreted only when it is over. If the outcome is good, painful constituents enjoy redemption. Negative moments can assume a happy necessity. If the outcome is bad, painful constituents enjoy affirmation, because of the (i) the process of reinterpretation, and (ii) the preceding celebration of the hoping-to-avoid and to succeed. Negative moments can assume a bleak necessity. The paradox and its solution bespeak the human commerce between past, present and future, and the human predisposition to give Apollonian form to Dionysian experience.

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## Sportsmanship: Virtue or Vice?

Sportsmanship (sometimes referred to as ‘sportspersonship’) is the quintessential sporting virtue. If not distinct to sport, it is the virtue most closely associated with sport. Yet, it has been undertheorised in the philosophy of sport literature (with Keating, Feezell, and Abad notable exceptions). In this paper, I consider, firstly, the nature of sportsmanship and, secondly, whether it constitutes a virtue in the context of contemporary elite and professional sport.

Both in sporting discourse and in the philosophy of sport literature, sportsmanship has been used to describe a loosely connected heap of conduct types. In the first part of the paper, I argue that sportsmanship should be distilled into at least three distinct concepts (sportsmanship, acting in a sportsmanlike way, and acting with humanity).

In the second part of the paper, I consider challenges to the place of sportsmanship in elite and professional sport. Does sportsmanship, properly understood, constitute a virtue in contemporary sport or has sport at the highest level entered a ‘post-sportsmanship’ era? In sporting contests organised around striving for excellence, sportsmanship can trigger ‘failed athletic contests’ whereby the competition outcome fails to track athletic superiority. Moreover, the increasing integration of gambling culture into sporting culture places a premium on outcomes that reflect athletic superiority. I reject these challenges and defend the continuing relevance of sportsmanship on the dual grounds that sportsmanship can be necessary for the achievement of meaningful competition and sport provides an avenue to display not only athletic excellence but also moral excellence.

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## If sport is art, what does that tell us about sporting merit?

### Abstract

A venerable idea is that sport is a form of art (Best 1974; Elcombe 2012; Gaffney 2013). Sport has aesthetic properties: it can be beautiful, or ugly. Sport involves creative human endeavour: the athlete and the artist both try to break new ground. And sporting achievement is typically merit-based such that it deserves praise and reward, much like achievement in the arts. Or so the standard story has it, at least. I will argue that if we understand sport as an art form this may significantly undermine the claim that sporting achievement is truly deserving of praise and reward in the manner we normally accept. I will focus on the world's most popular sport, football, and introduce an argument to the effect that football is a form of loosely scripted drama (some of what I say in this regard will overlap with Borge 2019).

I will then explore the consequences of viewing football in this way, using case studies of situations in which supposed biological or innate advantages that one competitor may have over another might be seen to undermine the claim that a sporting achievement is merited. I will argue that if football really is a form of unscripted drama, then there is no more intrinsic merit in anyone winning than a person cast in the winning role in a play has merit for that "victory". A key part of my argument will involve defending fictionalism about merit claims in the football-drama case, before justifying the claim that this argument generalises to other sports.

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## It ain't bragging if you can back it up: An analysis and (partial) defence of trash talk

### Abstract

Trash talk is a widespread phenomenon in both sports and other, non-sport games, and on first examination it looks rather puzzling. These hyperbolic statements of intent, put-downs, etc., accompany gameplay, but what, if anything, do they contribute to it given that the behaviour has very little to do with actual competitive performance? The limited literature on trash talk has generally assumed it to be either a straightforward expression of hostility or a distraction tactic, and this has substantially informed its evaluation. If neither assumption is an adequate characterisation of trash talk, though, it may be necessary to re-evaluate the phenomenon.

In this paper we first consider the simplest candidate explanation: that trash talk is an expression of genuine hostility. After finding this to be unsatisfactory, we consider two more complex possibilities: that trash talk is a tactic of distraction (the position that is favoured in the literature), and that it is a performance. Each is found to be inadequate for capturing aspects of the phenomenon.

The shortcomings, however, lead to an alternative proposal which builds on Kendall Walton's account of the behaviour of spectators of sport: that trash talk involves a complex act of make-believe relating to the potential impact of the trash-talker's words on the outcome. This make-believe also has the interesting feature, in some cases, of being made true (at least partially) by the act.

Finally, in exploring connections and questions raised by this analysis, we

- (i) outline some acts that display similar features,
- (ii) identify where apparent trash talk should not count as such according to our analysis
- (iii) suggest that many (but by no means all) instances of trash talk are less problematic than has previously been suggested.

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### Cunning

#### Abstract

Cunning is a virtue in many sports. Outside of sports, its status is ambivalent. It is not something one would normally boast of in a job interview and its reputation is mixed - neither unequivocally a vice nor a virtue.

One easy explanation for this difference turns to the idea of sports as play - cunning in sports is not real cunning but rather make-believe. This detaches the status of cunning in sports from the outside world. Such a solution is sound, but it raises some further complications concerning the role of sports and games in education. It is easy to appreciate that perverseness in sports is “real” perverseness, so why not cunning?

Instead of pursuing this line, my aim is to develop and defend the claim that in an important sense cunning is also a virtue. I introduce the idea of “situated virtue”. Virtues are commonly regarded as relative to practices. This relativism is widely understood as cultural. It will be argued that relativism extends to social positions such as class and gender. This conception of virtue allows us to recognize that some character traits that are necessary under certain circumstances can be constituents of a valid conception of the virtuous person, albeit a heterodox one.

On the basis of this view of virtue it is now possible to view cunning on a par with courage and perseverance and sports as inculcating virtue. This would lead us to highlight not only the ability to utilize cunning, but also the ability to distinguish and avoid unsporting cheating, etc. as essential aspects of the inculcation of the virtue.

Finally, I claim that applying the idea of situated virtue better accounts for the status of cunning in sports than treating as make-believe cunning.

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### The Intrusion of Non-Lusory Life into Modern Sport

#### Abstract

In his influential work on games titled *The Grasshopper*, Bernard Suits introduces the notion of a *lusory attitude* which is the attitude one must take in order for the activity one is engaged in to be considered a game. This attitude implies the acceptance of rules which prohibit more efficient means of achieving the *prelusory goal* of a game. This means, for instance, that one must kick a ball into the goal in football rather than carrying it with one’s hands. Not only does the lusory attitude make a game possible, but the ease or difficulty of achieving the prelusory goal as established by the rules helps determine whether the game is a good game or not.

A number of (largely) external elements of modern sports threaten the spirit of games by, in part, diminishing the lusory attitude of the participants as well as what I want to call the derivative lusory attitude of the spectator. VAR (video assisted referee), sports betting, and fixture congestion (playing too many games), run the risk of negatively transforming the activity or the spectacle, by shifting the focus outside of the lusory realm. When sports betting ads dominate match broadcasts, VAR decisions become “match highlights,” and fixture congestion leads to injury or exhaustion of the best players, I believe, in agreement with commentators such as William Morgan, that a valuable aspect of sport has been diminished or lost.

Whether anything can be done at the practical level to stop the dilution of the “spirit of sport” is a difficult question to answer, but I am primarily concerned with the philosophical issue of how professional sports are changing our basic attitudes towards games/sports. A new ethic seems to be replacing the one that Suits took for granted when he introduced the notion of a lusory attitude and his definition of a game. Non-lusory life has imposed itself on the lusory attitude of the game player and the spectator.

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## A monumental history – on road cycling, its monuments, and its historiography

### Abstract

*That the great moments in the struggle of the human individual constitute a chain (...) that is the fundamental idea (...) which finds expression in the demand for a monumental history*

-Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the uses and disadvantages of history for life*

Though it varies by sport, it's a well-known fact that a given competitor in any given sport is never just competing against their contemporary opponents, but is also in competition with the past, its records and legends. But while the histories and legends of many sports are well documented, it is much rarer to find any poignant reflections on a sport's *historiography*. How does a sport record and recall its own past? And how does the past and the manner of its recollection affect a sport and its competitors in the present?

Any generalized and all-encompassing historiography of sport would obviously be ahistorical. In this presentation, I will instead attempt to sketch out the historiography of a particular sport, professional road cycling, a sport which in turn is particularly occupied with its own legend and maintaining “an indelible connection with the great champions of the past” (Cossins 2014). I will focus on the recent and extremely successful recategorization of five of the sport's biggest races as “monuments”, and analyze the monument as an important historiographical concept.

This, I claim, reveals two important things about the historiography of professional road cycling: That the “monument” function as a regulative idea in a Kantian sense, and that the sport's historiography is emblematic of what Friedrich Nietzsche called “monumental history” – “the belief in the solidarity and continuity of the greatness of all ages and a protest against the passing away of generations and the transitoriness of things” (Nietzsche 1997).

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## If You're An Egalitarian, How Come You're So Into Sport?

### Abstract

Sporting competition is often seen as paradigmatically non-egalitarian in its substantive character. That is, while sport typically employs a formal commitment to equal standing or equal opportunity for participants, its ultimate result is to pick out and reward exceptional performance, giving rise to clear status distinctions between winners and losers. From this perspective, the correspondence of an increasingly unequal socioeconomic system and a massively prominent contemporary cultural role being taken by sports stars is no accident. Is valuing sport, therefore, something that sits uneasily with a broader egalitarian perspective?

In this paper, I aim to connect recent work in political philosophy surrounding the nature and value of competitive arrangements with debate in the philosophy of sport in order to show that substantive moral commitments to individual equality actually provide us with a sound and appropriate foundation for making sense of the form and practice of competitive sport. Drawing on the Suitsian account of games as engagement with unnecessary obstacles, I seek to characterise sporting contests as representing iterative challenges to participants, wherein departures from an initial state of equality must be based upon demonstrated efforts within the sporting arena to keep overcoming these obstacles. The status of winners or champions is, therefore, to be understood as always temporary and conditional upon continuing to submit to repeated demands to test themselves through engagement with opponents who are striving to dethrone them. Rather than giving rise to differences in status, we can define sport instead as something that always puts all participants in the same condition, at risk of losing.

I argue that this characterisation of the relationship between sporting competition and equality enables important normative conclusions for the regulation of sporting contests, but may also carry significant implications for the broader use of competitive arrangements beyond sport.

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## Category Mistakes and Rights in Sport

### Abstract

This paper attempts to pick apart some of the strictly philosophical, as opposed to legal, confusions in discussions about a supposed human right to sport. The first of these is: what is a human right and how does it differ from other political/civil rights. To answer this, we need to consider the grounds for declaring anything to be a human right. We have such rights by virtue of being human, not simply because of our species, but because, as human, we have an evolved moral capacity, which includes rationality, self-reflectivity, judgement, and the ability to at least attempt to act on our judgements about what is best. This is an ontological description; it says nothing about the normative value of our decisions or even whether it is good that humans have this capacity, only that they do and that it is typical of them.

The second set of questions concerns the content of human rights, including whether sport could be a human right, and what possible restrictions there are on such rights (e.g., if sustenance is a human right, does that mean I can take your dinner?). A third set of questions concerns those rights that only occur in a polity or sub-polity. For these rights there will be qualifications and many of these will be based on what we *do* rather than *are*. Eligibility will at times have an ontological basis in recognition, as in voting rights, but is generally based in the practical function of the organisation in question, especially for sub-polities like sport federations. These need to balance functional needs of the practice and recognition and fairness for members, or lose legitimacy.

While access to sport in general is a question of justice in allocation of social resources, access to specific instances of sport is an eligibility question for those instances. Human and civil rights rest on differing qualifications. Moreover, human rights are abstract and cannot be stipulative; stipulated rights are political and require consultation/agreement between affected parties. Hence resort to human rights to settle eligibility claims in sport represent a category mistake.

**Keywords:** Human rights, civil rights, moral standing, eligibility, sport, justice

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## The Aging Edge in Adventure Sport

### Abstract

People who play sport and exercise into old age typically find positive ways to manage age-related physical decline. They may work to improve their training and health regimens, or take time to appreciate their hard-won excellence in technique. They might draw on resilience built over a lifetime, or work to accept athletic decline with equanimity. They might focus on enjoyment or the health and social benefits of sport. And they may devote more time to coaching or improving their sport. Participants thus find valuable compensations for reduced athletic performance.

Adventure sport participants manage age-related decline in similar ways, but their efforts to compensate may meet greater resistance. For many, aging pushes the risk of their sport past what many would consider acceptable, even for adventurers. Pursuing safer versions of their sport might seem to cleanse it of adventure and reduce its appeal. Participants may also experience greater ageism and age-based stereotype threat, given that aging bodies fall outside still influential ideals created in the Euro-masculine origins of western adventure sport. So many adventure enthusiasts arguably leave their activities too soon or avoid new adventure sports they would otherwise try.

To support positive aging in adventure sport, I develop a perspective offering an intrinsically valuable reason to pursue adventure sport specifically in old age. My argument is that older participants can experience edgework in a uniquely meaningful way. This kind of edgework is rooted in how knowledge-oriented aesthetic feelings such as awe, beauty, curiosity and sublimity transform as the liminal edge of life becomes more translucent with time. Articulating “the aging edge” expands understandings of adventure sport and supports greater participation into old age.

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## Comparing Concepts of Sport in Guttmann, Suits, and Parry

### Abstract

With the rise of e-sports, the definition of 'sport' has become a hot topic again. Scholars have explored various types of sports through different research approaches, such as traditional and modern sports, Olympic and natural sports, and indigenous and global sports. This essay aims to compare the similarities and differences in the concept of 'sport' among Allen Guttmann, Bernard Suits, and Jim Parry.

This research shows four significant points.

- First, Parry is neutral on the impossibility of conceptual definitions, whereas Guttmann and Suits take an opposing stance.
- Secondly, by the term 'sport', Guttmann refers to 'modern sport', while Suits and Parry refer to 'Olympic sport'.
- Thirdly, regarding the relationship between games and sport, Guttmann considers sport to be in the realm of competitive games. Suits and Parry, meanwhile, advocate that sport is not a sub-category of games.
- Finally, physical skill and competition are common elements in Guttmann, Suits, and Parry's sports definitions.

**Keywords:** games; amateur; performance; physical contests; utilitarianism

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## Why Are the Japanese So Good at Kendo? Bodymind Praxis and the Way of the Sword

### Abstract

Japan dominates kendō. It is a long-debated question amongst Western kendōka as to why they fall so far behind. A recent proposal is that they are leaving out feeling and looking at kendō from purely intellectual and physical perspectives (Roquelaure 2021, p. 18). This study develops this proposal into a mature theory of bodymind praxis in kendō.

For the Westerner, if it is true that bodymind praxis is why the Japanese are so good at kendō, the most important question is how to achieve such praxis themselves. To this there are several possible methods, including relentless training in kendō in which we eventually begin to feel and cease to distinguish between feeling, thinking and acting in a 'flow state' (Sylvester 2023, ch. 1); or what has been called 'cultural insight training' (Kasulis 1990a; 1990b; 2002); or, the original solution proposed with the suggestion to feel more – which is here developed and termed the bodymind thesis (see Yuasa 1987) – enculturating kendō into one's own local culture (Roquelaure 2021, p. 19 f.).

In theory, this should allow Westerners to properly comprehend, or 'live' (ibid. p. 18) – or 'engage' (Kasulis 2018) – kendō. However, it is questionable to what extent bodymind praxis is the way forward for kendō outside Japan: this study concludes by raising this concern in conjunction with the equally recent rise of statistical analysis in kendō, which relies entirely on an emotionless intellectual examination of physical phenomena to arrive at a complete understanding of kendō.

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## Buddha and Odysseus Martial Face-off – Cunning, Improvisation, and Virtuosity

### Abstract

According to lore Siddhartha Gautama (who would become the historical Buddha) and Odysseus both professed unparalleled skill with the horse, bow, and sword. Leaving aside the Greek hero's fictionality, the presentation relies on them to frame an East-West comparative examination of ideas pertinent to opportune and skilled action in martial arts, sports, and beyond.

First, the notion of *kairós*, the favorable or critical moment seized to gain advantage, is considered—chiefly in the context of *mētis* (cunning action) that Odysseus embodies.

Second, this is related to *upāya* (Sanskrit)/*hōben* (Japanese), tailored expedient or skilled means that fit a specific situation in the path toward enlightenment, and which has pivotal relevance for improvised action central to martial and sporting performance.

Third, and last, the ongoing exploration of similarities and contrasts leads to a broader discussion of skill and virtue in relation to the import and meaning of such actions, and virtuosity.

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## Is Sport the 'last bastion of Meritocracy'? A philosophical inquiry into the 'Myth' of Meritocracy in Sport

### Abstract

Meritocracy, the notion that an individual's ability and hard work should determine their allocation of societal rewards, opportunities, position and status is an enduring ideal of modern political thought. It is considered a common way of organising our society, institutions, economy and polity. However, commentators have questioned meritocracy's ability to empower, improve social mobility and provide equal opportunities due to variations such as accidents of birth; differential access to education and health care; economic, social and cultural capital; and discrimination. Recent scholarship has referred to meritocracy as 'an illusion', 'a tyranny' and 'a myth'.

In this paper, I explore this legitimacy crisis of meritocracy and ask if professional organised sports may be inflicted with the 'myth' of meritocracy. Meritocracy offers a unique vantage point to assess organised sport because sport seeks to find the best performers at each stage of the sporting pyramid (local, national, continental, international) and pit them against each other. Thus, meritocratic competition is perhaps the essence of sport.

I begin by undertaking a literature review to draw out the constituents of the socio-political theory of meritocracy. I then study the literature on the philosophy, sociology and history of sport to understand the meaning and purpose of sport. Subsequently, I explore the relevance of inquiring the links between sport and meritocracy and apply the socio-political theory of meritocracy to the philosophical understanding of sport to investigate if and how sport might suffer from the 'myth' or meritocracy. I conclude that sport suffers from the 'myth' of meritocracy generally. However, the extent to which a sport is meritocratic would vary depending on the sport in question, the society where it is played, the disadvantage that a group identity may face, and the internal or external philosophical lenses which are being employed in assessing a claim.

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## The Courage to Quit

### Abstract

My aim in this paper is to explore more closely the virtue of courage in sport. In particular, I examine a dominant courage narrative which celebrates the value of never giving up. This narrative is common in many different sports and its most visible manifestation is perhaps the (ultra) endurance athlete pushing their body to the limits and refusing to quit the run, swim, cycle ride or ascent. Tom Simpson's apocryphal request to 'put me back on the bike' moments before his collapse and death on Mont Ventoux during the thirteenth stage of the 1967 Tour de France embodies the ambivalent virtue of continuing at all costs.

Aristotle argued that the virtue of courage appeared as a mean between two vices namely cowardice and recklessness. For Aristotle it mattered what you feared and why you were willing to face them – your motives and the goal must be worthy. Was Simpson reckless? Was he too cowardly to quit? Where his motives and goals laudable? Rorty (1986: 153) argues that "Courage is most dangerous when a person acts for the sake of being courageous, taking it to be an independent good, rather than one measured by its ends, bounded, checked and directed by other virtues".

From a therapeutic perspective one might question whether his actions were rational or reasonable or whether he was in a grip of some compulsion or obsession which clouded his judgment. These questions are complex and multilayered, but I want to suggest that at times the dominant 'never give up' ethic produces poor judgment in athletes and coaches. Moreover, I want to argue that we don't have to wait for serious negative consequence to make an evaluation. Prudence gives us the opportunity to 'quit' before any damage (physical, psychological or social) is done.

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## Esports: Towards transhumanism

### Abstract

Over the past 20 years, there has been a considerable amount of debate in the field of philosophy of sport about whether (or not) esports can be considered a sport. Given that humans create all sports for humans (Reid 2012), the debate should perhaps focus on the relationship between esports and humanity. Esports are a human activity that differs from conventional sports in that they take place in a hybrid world, simultaneously existing in both the real and virtual worlds. However, a question arises: Is the human condition of esports players the same as that of traditional athletes?

This paper argues that the hybrid world of esports alters players' humanity, leading to a state of transhumanism. Transhumanism, as defined by Atasoy (2021), is the transcendence of the natural limits of the human mind and body through technology. In esports, this is achieved through the technological ability of the human body to be in two different worlds simultaneously, which enhances its abilities. The esports players can be transformed into radical cyborgs, as described by Atasoy (2021), with their cognitive and physical abilities and skills integrated from the real world into the virtual world of video games.

The integration mentioned above enhances the human condition of players, aligning with the purpose of transhumanism to develop improved human capabilities through technology (More 2013; Atasoy 2021). According to Bostrom's (2003) thesis, human nature is imperfect and should be in a state of evolution. However, it is worth considering whether such an evolution of the human species would have a positive impact on sports and athletics. The connection between esports and transhumanism raises concerns not only about sports and their values but also about human beings themselves.

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## The IOC, Political Neutrality, and Public Norms of Recognition

### Abstract

On her essay on violence, mourning, and politics, Judith Butler (2004) sketches several ideas regarding the inherent vulnerability of humans. She argues that all people are necessarily subject to what she calls relational vulnerability, due to their political constitution formed simultaneously by individual embodiment and social interdependence on others.

One of her most provocative arguments stemming from this idea is a paradoxical tendency to reject relational vulnerability (thinking e.g., *they* are vulnerable, but not *us*), whilst also establishing exclusionist public vulnerability recognition norms (e.g., public mourning and public grievance). Public vulnerability norms of recognition (i.e., who we publicly grieve for) are established predominantly upon familiarity and proximity features and are excluding of those who do not meet the familiarity/proximity criteria (i.e., the loss of *one of us, humans*, is publicly grievable; but the loss of *one of them, others*, is not to exist in the political).

Further, in explaining who mourns and who establishes the norms for publicly recognizing vulnerability, Butler extends the formation of the subject beyond individuals. Subjects, she says, encompass “a model for agency and intelligibility that is very often based on notions of sovereign power” (2004, p. 45). So, it is not just individuals who experience and normalize (as in, set norms, regulate) vulnerability, it can be other forms of agency and intelligibility, such as nations, or institutions.

I shall critically analyze how the establishment of public vulnerability norms of recognition has unfolded within the realm of international sport, by comparing the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) regulations and public statements issued in response to the Russia-Ukraine war versus the lack thereof on the Israel-Palestine war. I will argue that the differential in responses and regulations between both conflicts establishes new norms of public vulnerability recognition, and that this differential advances a biased political neutrality, often to the detriment of non-western subjects, societies, and ultimately athletes, and the Olympic Movement.

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## Body, image, art: between aesthetics, phenomenology and anthropology of sport

### Abstract

Fighting is one of the oldest human activities, along with all the basic needs, that is still present among us in its original form, either through young children’s play or by full-scale wars. This presence is inscribed not only in our essence but also in the history of art.

The field of the aesthetics of sport focuses on the study of the access to an aesthetic experience that sport can offer to those who relate to it, whether they be players, fans, or others. If sports’ aesthetics constitutes a place of revelation of beauty, and other categories, inside or through the game, the attempt here is quite the opposite, i.e., to access the aesthetics of sport not from sport itself but through art works, and how this specific point of view can:

- a) constitute a form of knowledge, and
- b) enrich the interpretation of the sporting phenomenon under analysis.

In the context of boxing, we will try to draw a synthetic arch in relation to art with a particular emphasis on painting. The main goals of this essay are:

1. to think sport through the triangulation between body-word-image in relation to the paradoxical sporting body (visible by the contradiction between the singularity of each body and the impossibility of homogenizing its nature within the radical ontological dichotomy between body-bodies);
2. to revisit some representations of boxing in order to clarify through the works of art some of its key moments in the unveiling of the notion of sporting gesture;
3. to focus on and interpret one of the selected paintings in greater depth to establish an hermeneutic horizon that will lead to the better understanding of what a work of art can make to the depth and complexity of the sporting phenomenon under consideration.

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## Football Academies and Exploitation

### Abstract

When football academies keep releasing large numbers of players from apprenticeship contracts, it raises a number of concerns about practices within football academies, particularly when this leads to unemployment, mental health issues, and suicide. Media coverage aptly characterises these practices as exploitative.

The first aim of this paper is to provide an account of the practice of using young people in sport, usually through an apprenticeship contract between the ages of 16-18 years, as a form of exploitation. Often, misconceptions of 'merit' and 'doing what you love' are involved.

Secondly, I identify the wrong-making features of this form of exploitation, the most serious being the background injustices that are sustained through current football apprenticeship schemes.

Finally, I consider appropriate responses. I argue that football academies have special compensatory duties when they release a player from contract, that are proportional to the degree of the player's unjust treatment. This compensation may then be used to facilitate new career opportunities.

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## The Arguments for In-Game Referee Assistance Technology (I-GRAT) Revisited

### Abstract

In the past few years, the debate over the use of in-game referee assistance technology (IGRAT) has gained substantial traction in some academic circles. So far, most contributions to this debate have focused on the various arguments presented in favor of IGRAT.

Unfortunately, very few of these contributions have discussed the implausibility of the assumptions which support these arguments. In fact, despite the introduction of IGRAT such as VAR (Video Assistance Referee) and instant replays in some top European soccer and American sport major leagues, the fundamental issues raised by Tamba Nlandu (2012) remain mostly unexamined. Among others, *referee scapegoating*, the *epistemological fallibilism* of games, and the *illusion of infallibility* which have so far supported most calls for IGRAT remain mostly unchallenged.

This paper aims to re-emphasize the fact that unless these fundamental issues are given proper consideration, the assumptions behind the current arguments for IGRAT will remain implausible.

**Key Words:** In-game referee assistance technology; referee scapegoating; fallibilism.

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## Navigating the Philosophical Landscape of “Spirit of the Game”: Assessing Criminal Liability in Sports in light of Implied Consent vis-à-vis Playing Culture

### Abstract

Contact sports carry the risk of player collision, legally pronounced as implied consent, that entails participant’s consent to bodily contact during sports which is ordinarily and reasonably incidental to the playing of the game in question. However, it does not extend to conduct that is overtly violent as intentional injury during a sport is not immune to criminal law. Yet, the mantra to determine when an alleged violent act, during a game, becomes criminal is not simple. Thanks to *R v Barnes* (2004) and *R v Cey* (1989), courts laid down an objective criterion based on type of sport, safety rules, nature of injury, the ‘playing culture’, etc.

Although these criteria act as guidelines, there remains a grey area between conduct that is intrinsic to the spirit of the game and thus within the boundaries of implied sporting consent and that which is extrinsic to playing culture and thus vulnerable to criminal liability because the philosophy of the playing culture recognizes that in competitive sports, actions outside the rules are expected in the heat of the game but may not reach the threshold of criminality.

The object of this paper is to study the contentious criteria- ‘the playing culture’, from a philosophical & sociological standpoint. Divided into four parts, the paper shall examine how modern sports regulate sanctioned and unsanctioned aggression on the field, the jurisprudential aspect of violence in sports. It shall also investigate how the unique ethos of popular contact sport contributes to the perception and tolerance of violence and provide valuable insights for sports ecosystem, fostering a nuanced approach to the criminalization of on-field violence that respects both the essence of the sport and broader societal expectations.

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## Modalities of Inclusion in Sport (a partial response to Martinkova)

### Abstract

In this paper I analyse the idea of ‘inclusion’ in sport. This paper, which is a work in progress, is in part a reply to Martinkova. I present an analysis of inclusion, aiming to break it down into its components, thereby disambiguating some of the discussion around the term.

Inclusion rests on a ‘container metaphor’ – that a person, or team, or some other monad is ‘contained’, inside, rather than outside a ‘container’ of some sort (a practice, a category, a social institution, a class etc.) This points us to investigating the ‘topography’ of the containers. For example, an individual might be ‘in prison’ – included into the prison community – but thereby ‘outside society’ – excluded. We might presume that they would prefer to be included in society and excluded from prison. Equally, it might be possible for someone to play sport – included in the ‘sport for all’ container – but not in the category they would prefer – thereby excluded.

The notion of inclusion is moralised if we regard inclusion as a good in itself. This might rest on an account of affective inclusion – as a matter of affective attitudes to the included, just as another included person. A non-moralised account of inclusion would rest on an account of inclusion only as instrumentally valuable – as allowing access not to the ‘container’ per se – but to the value that it contains.

The discussion of inclusion in sport founders on the ambiguities between these different meanings. It is, (I now think) a mistake to depict people as ‘for’ or ‘against’ inclusion. I am strongly in favour of inclusion in sport in the sport-for-all sense. The people I’m arguing against mean, by inclusion, the inclusion into categories and inclusion as affect. That’s how they get to ‘mystifying accusations of hate’ as Naomi Cunningham has put it. The accusation of hate follows from two mistakes. These are Category Confusion: inclusion into sport with inclusion into categories, and Affect Confusion: inclusion as eligibility with inclusion as affect.

The thought that we should try to get a neutral, non-moralised notion of inclusion in sport comes from noticing that we should have no problem at all with the exclusion involved in knock out competitions and relegation/promotion to leagues. Nothing is sacred, including the word ‘inclusion’. We need more analysis, and more thought. No one should say they are ‘passionately’ or ‘incredibly’ committed to inclusion unless they can say what they mean by the term.

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## “Sublimations and Fantasies: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Defense Mechanisms in Sports and E-Sports”

### Abstract

This text explores two ego defense mechanisms, “fantasy” and “sublimation,” and applies them to a psychoanalytic-philosophical perspective on traditional sports and e-sports. Our objective is not to conclude whether e-sports should be considered sports, an active discussion in the field of Philosophy of Sport (e.g. Heere, 2018; Parry 2019) but, instead, to provide a psychoanalytic-philosophical framework to enrich the debate.

Ego defense mechanisms, fundamental in Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory (1899; 1901; 1905; 1923; 1924a; 1924b), are unconscious psychological strategies that the ego employs to manage emotional conflicts, anxieties, stress, and threats to self-integrity. They play a crucial role in protecting the ego from the tensions that arise from conflicting demands of the ID-unconscious (which seeks immediate gratification of desires) and the superego (representing internalized social and moral norms). In a hermeneutic-psychoanalytic analysis, I establish, on one hand, a connection between sublimation and conventional sports and, on the other hand, between fantasy and e-sports.

“Sublimation,” being an adaptive mechanism, redirects impulses, emotions, or personal desires considered unacceptable or socially inappropriate toward socially accepted and culturally valued activities. The intensity of physicality and participation in real scenarios emerge as crucial factors in this association. On the other hand, “fantasy,” which involves the management of psychic conflict through more imaginative images and symbols, leads us to relate this defense mechanism to e-sports.

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## Selfhood and Competitive Sport

### Abstract

Several scholars have defended accounts of the value of (some type of) sport by reference to its role in human self-development or the development of selfhood (e.g., Howe 2003 and 2004, Russell 2005, and Andersen 2021). Another body of scholarship that sometimes overlaps with the previous one addresses the nature of competition and the character trait of competitiveness in different forms (e.g., Hyland 1984, Howe 2004, Jones 2015, Gilbertson 2016, and MacRae 2018).

This paper aims to contribute to the intersection of these two literatures by developing an account of the good of competition and of virtuous competitiveness in sport that draws on a particular view of the structure of selfhood with roots in Fichte and Kierkegaard. On this view, to be a self is to actively integrate the givenness of oneself with a set of goals one has taken up. I argue that this view of selfhood provides a useful framework for analyzing the benefits (as well as dangers) of competitive sport and for distinguishing virtuous from vicious competitiveness.

By engaging in competitive sport, one analytically takes up the goal of winning individual sports contests. To actively integrate the givenness of oneself with the goal of winning a specific contest means to deploy one’s current, relevant physical and mental abilities to that end. But winning individual contests is not the ultimate goal of competitive sport. Crucially, this ultimate goal is infinite: it is to win any contest in the sport and to keep on winning. To actively integrate the givenness of oneself with this ultimate goal of competitive sport means to strive to harness all one’s potential to be the best you can be in the sport. Virtuous competitiveness is, and vicious competitiveness is not, compatible with each competitor undertaking this project of selfhood in sport.

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### **From ‘Robot Wars’ to super-athletes: public perception as a criterion to set the limits for performance-enhancing modification**

#### Abstract

‘*Robot Wars*’, a TV show that featured robot combat competitions, showed for the first time a technological and steely face of combat sports: no gloves and muscles but hammers, rotating blades, spurs, and flamethrowers. Later, speculation on the sporting competition of the future resumed embodied characters, but towards the ‘post-human’. The ‘Enhanced Games’ are a ‘faster, higher, stronger’ alternative to the Olympic Games. What ‘*Robot Wars*’ and these super athletes have in common is the character of the design of those specifications that make them competitively superior to their opponents.

Even if using genetic modification for performance enhancement in sports is not currently allowed by the WADA Code that includes in the ‘prohibited methods’ gene editing, gene silencing, gene transfer technologies, and the use of normal or genetically modified cells as forms of ‘gene-doping’, the possibility of genetic modification of human embryos will create a new look for future athletes. Does the objection to performance-enhancing modification of athletes as ‘dehumanisation’ make sense when we think of genetically modified super-athletes? Does the protection of natural talent, which equates with ensuring a level playing field, set an agenda of moral education to shape public attitudes towards sportsmanship?

I will examine factors that might give rise to suspicion and disfavour in the viewing public, suggesting public perception as an important criterion for the revision of sport’s categories.

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### **Sport as a cause and casualty of climate change: is this the end of sport as we know it?**

#### Abstract

A consensus is growing that we have missed our target to limit global warming to a relatively safe 1.5° above pre-industrial levels, and that we are more likely to reach a catastrophic 3° of warming by the end of the century (UNEP, 2023). As a result, our planet and its climate will change unrecognisably and our existence along with it. With such changes, sport as we know it, cannot continue.

Professional sport is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, primarily through transport, venue construction and management, and artificial snow production (Bernard *et al.*, 2021). According to a global review by Wilby *et al.* (2022), sport emissions account for about 0.5% of global emissions, a level comparable to the aviation sector. Moreover, sport emissions are projected to increase by 4.4% per year, unless drastic mitigation measures are taken. Yet sport, and its effects on the climate, have been largely absent from the wider debate and public consciousness.

At the same time, sport is already being heavily impacted by the effects of climate change. Sports such as cricket and snow events are under particular threat as the planet suffers extreme heat (*Game Changer*, 2018 / 2023, *Hit for Six*, 2019). The demise of elite sport is already upon us as the cost and harms of hosting sports mega-events, such as the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup, increases, and the only countries left willing to take them on are those in autocratic regimes who are willing to spend gratuitously and burn the earth’s resources in the process.

Clearly, this trajectory is unsustainable. What then, is the future for sport?

This paper sets out the reality we, as sports lovers, need to face in coming to terms with the harmful effects of current (elite and professional) sport on climate change, and sets out a possible future for sport as a part of a very different human civilization.

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### “Chiefly for the soul’s sake”: Physical Training, Contests, and Development in the Republic

#### Abstract

The proper education of the citizens of the just state is of crucial importance to its success; as Plato’s Socrates asserts at *Republic* 541a, it is the “speediest and easiest way” by which such an ideal state could be established. To this end, in the *Republic*, Socrates designs an extensive educational program that is meant not only to produce good citizens, but also to identify and cultivate properly virtuous philosophical leaders.

It is an intriguing feature of the *Republic*’s curriculum that it requires extensive participation in physical training and contests. Socrates is clear that this training is not for “mere strength.” Instead, he asserts that this training is for the benefit of a particular part of the soul: “Even the exercises and toils of gymnastics he will undertake with a view to the spirited part of his nature to arouse that ... unlike ordinary athletes, who treat diet and exercise as a means to muscle.” (*Republic* 410b)

Unfortunately, however, Plato’s descriptions of this high-spirited part (*thumos*) do not at first glance suggest a unitary or well-defined faculty of soul - let alone one that ought to be fostered in the natures of his guardians. In addition, Socrates does not provide a detailed account of the means by which physical training and contests strengthen this aspect of the soul - or of the means by which these practices contribute to the development of the citizens of the *Republic*.

This paper, then, brings Plato into conversation with recent work in the philosophy of sports by Faulkner, Johnson, and Reid to illuminate a role for physical training and contests in the *Republic*’s educational curriculum. How might we think about personal development through physical training and participation in contests? How could these practices contribute to the cultivation of virtuous and philosophical citizens?

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### Tracking Devices as Extensions of the Embodied Self

#### Abstract

This paper explores the possibilities of extension of the embodied self through technologies like wearable devices used on an everyday basis for physical activity tracking. Tracking was the leading fitness trend in 2023 (Thompson 2023), which goes to show how prevalent these technologies are, and warrant further investigation.

Following Thomas Fuchs’ theories on the phenomenology of the embodied mind (2018; 2021), this paper supports the idea that the self is fundamentally embodied and cannot be reduced to the brain or a mystical entity separate from the body. Fuchs describes the self as an embodied, indivisible, and self-aware entity which consists in the physical body (the processes of life) and the lived body (the experience of said processes) which are inseparably linked.

Drawing on both Fuchs’ insights and the extended mind theory by Andy Clark and David Chalmers (1998), this paper argues that self-tracking can be conceived as an extension of the embodied self. This will add to the existing literature that has discussed extensions of the self as i) cognitive extension (e.g. memory), ii) physical extension (e.g. prostheses), and lived extension (e.g. phantom limbs). It will explicate how self-tracking bears similarities to these forms of extension but can also differ in significant ways. The cases of tracking devices are particularly interesting because of their function of giving insight into the lived experience from a source beyond the physical body.

Further, this argument invites more research to be conducted on the moving, embodied self, and its interaction with digital technology. Through a further discussion of counterarguments and examples the paper aims to establish that wearable technologies are one way in which the self can be extended, thus giving insight into the embodied self in the digital age.

**Keywords:** embodied self / wearable tracking devices / extension of self / digital technology

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### Bioethics and Sport: Which Way Forward?

#### Abstract

In recent decades, sports have seen many technological and bio-medicine novum which made a significant impact on the course of sports development. However, various ethical issues came along, which traditional ethics couldn't and cannot resolve. Issues with doping, along with cases of cyborg (Pistorius), intersex (Semenya), and transgender athletes (Thomas) in sports competitions have emphasized the need for new ethics in the new era – Bioethics.

To address these ethical concerns, other relevant disciplines such as Biology, Chemistry, Technology, Law, and Economy must be taken into account. This is how and why Bioethics of Sport (BES) has become a central focus for scholars and discussions. It has quickly become one of the most vibrant and important fields of philosophy of sport, where scholars deal with issues that can endanger the integrity and future of sports.

In this paper, I seek ways forward for BES and propose four ways to improve it. Firstly, while BES has not been defined or characterized properly, I argue for the analysis of different understandings of bioethics and the possibilities of applying them to sports. Secondly, I propose making BES divisions and contours clear and in a plausible order. Here, it is especially important to draw a clear distinction between ethics and bioethics of sport. Thirdly, I propose widening the thematic spectrum of BES with four additional bioethical topics: a) sport, ecology, and environment; b) non-human animals and sport; c) vulnerability and compassion in sport; and d) sports (bio)ethical codes and (bio)ethical committees. Fourthly, I raise the question of methodology - how is multi/interdisciplinary research conducted in BES, with an emphasis on the role of ethics in relation to the other disciplines?

**Keywords:** Bioethics of Sport; bioethics, divisions, contours; thematic spectre; methodology

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### “I Can No Longer Support You”

#### Abstract

Supporting a sporting team is a tribal affair. We may be very passionate about our favoured team, which may cause us misery or joy, depending on their fortune. In this talk, I explore the question of when (or if) it is appropriate to withdraw one's support. In 2023, Rachel Riley made the news with her comments about the response from Manchester United to the Mason Greenwood scandal. She said that she would stop supporting the club if they allowed Greenwood to play again. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/66540492>)

There does seem to be something inappropriate about continuing to support a team embroiled in serious moral failings. Archer and Wojtowicz correctly point out various ways we can fail morally by supporting a club or individual, including the contribution to sportswashing, manifesting a lack of concern for victims, and exhibiting a toleration for racism. Supporting clubs failing in such ways can have negative consequences, and also make one *complicit* in existing injustices (Archer and Wojtowicz 2023: 144). However, we do not typically think it exhibits a moral failing to support teams involved in some practices we may disapprove of. We might for instance think that most football teams are morally culpable for having extensive carbon footprints, but not that this is sufficient to make support impermissible.

In this paper, I suggest one way to evaluate the permissibility of supporting a sports team. I utilise the notion of “deal-breakers”, which I draw from the literature on sexual consent (e.g., Dougherty 2013). I suggest that many of us do have certain deal-breakers – moral Rubicons which must not be crossed.

As sports fans, we may fail in two ways here:

- 1) by being overly tolerant of atrocious behaviour (no deal-breakers or too permissive deal-breakers),
- 2) by continuing to support a team that has violated one's deal-breakers.

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## **The Value of Technology in Paralympic Sports - A Conceptual and Ethical Analysis of the Use of Lower - limb Prostheses**

### **Abstract**

Technology plays a vital role in Paralympic sports, yet this role has only been partially explored philosophically, and a conceptual foundation is missing. In the past, technologies repeatedly sparked controversy and thus threatened sport and its values. One of the most famous examples is the use of Össur's Flex-Foot Cheetah prostheses in Para athletics. Critics of such technologies argue that their use would deskill sport, take away the importance of the 'human' and 'natural' factor of performance, and lead to unfair competition.

In the debates about using advanced technologies, fairness as a fundamental value of sport is one of the most frequently cited arguments. With the purpose of strengthening and enriching the philosophical stance in these discussions, this work aims to offer crucial ethical groundwork focusing on the value of fairness and a typology of Para-specific technology. To this end, a conceptual analysis sheds light on the complex relationship between fairness and the use of technology in the structure of sport. This knowledge is of critical importance for sport governing bodies, which can only make ethically informed decisions if the underlying concepts and connections are recognized.

An extension to Loland's sport technology typology and functions is proposed to establish a conceptual basis that encompasses all types of technologies used in Paralympic sports. Further, the use of lower-limb prostheses and its implications for fairness are assessed, highlighting the concerns around access and costs of this innovation. In addition, a critical review of the respective policies investigates how the value of fairness operates within current regulations. The review revealed a lack of detail and clarity on how fairness should be implemented and a conceptual inaccuracy to lower-limb prostheses that could lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the rules.

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## **Sporting Excellence Revisited - A Virtue Ethics Approach**

### **Abstract**

Many philosophers of sport stress the importance of pursuing excellence in sport, yet few of them articulate the precise nature of sporting excellence, representing a gap in the philosophical literature. In this paper, I attempt to explore the concept of sporting excellence from the broader overarching perspective of virtue ethics.

I first utilise MacIntyre's definition of practices to expand our perception of sport as a social practice that has internal goods and secures valuable external goods through the pursuit of the internal goods/excellences which are themselves conducive to broader human flourishing. However, the description of internal goods in MacIntyre's practice is somewhat opaque. In order to address the specificity of the internal goods, I set out an analysis of the relationships between the constitutive rules and the internal goods exemplified within the context of fencing. I argue that constitutive rules play an important role in structuring excellence, i.e., defining the logical space in which an excellent action can occur, but rules fail to tell people how to play the game. To understand various forms of excellence in sport, we must also consider the role of conventions in locating excellence within different historical and cultural contexts.

Building on MacIntyre's work, John William Devine's definition of sporting excellence as "physical, intellectual, and volitional capacities" that contribute to achieving victory in a specific sport is critically evaluated. If we accept that the inherent value of sport is to pursue excellence, which has a moral educational function and may significantly contribute to a good life, then sporting excellence should encompass virtues to fulfill this fundamental purpose. This paper therefore concludes that the integration of both skills and virtues in sporting excellence may foster a more ethically grounded and morally enriching concept.

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## “What’s in a (Team) Name? Cultural Appropriation, Permission, and Consequences of the Usage of Controversial Nicknames and Mascots”

There is increasing agreement that the usage of Native American mascots and nicknames is unacceptable: in the United States, professional leagues have eliminated names and symbols that made use of Native American slurs, and the NCAA issued a general ban on the usage of such mascots in college athletics in 2005. However, some teams—notably those with permission of specific tribes to use their names—maintain that their uses of these nicknames are not “hostile and abusive,” but honorific, and have been granted exceptions to the policy. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, despite efforts to eliminate racist and antisemitic chants from football stadia, fans of Tottenham Hotspur maintain that their usage of a Jewish slur as a self-identifier is not an example of race hate, but instead a noble effort to “reclaim” a term intended as derogatory by rival fans. In this context, British authorities have dropped prosecutions of Spurs fans arrested for using the term. In this paper, I examine these cases through the lens of the philosophical literature on cultural appropriation, with particular attention to the question of the role of in-group “permission” to authorize people who are not Native or Jewish to participate in activities or speech that might otherwise be ethically suspect. I argue that although philosophers have rightly attempted to incorporate such considerations into their accounts, permission alone is not sufficient to render such usage acceptable. Rather, we must also consider the larger engagement of would-be appropriators with the group whose name and imagery they wish to draw on, as well as the effects of these acts of appropriation. The specific type of appropriation involved in using an ethnic or tribal group as a sports team mascot or nickname, on this account, cannot be defended, regardless of the existence of in-group permission.

Tsung-Teng Wang

## Can Dangerous Sports Facilitate Authentic Living?

### Abstract

Can dangerous sports facilitate authentic living? Breivik (2010) used skydiving as an example and pointed out that as experience and ability increase, the possibility of authentic living decreases. The purpose of this study is to argue that this is not true. I argue that the possibility of authentic living does not diminish for highly-skilled dangerous sports professionals, as their expertise increases.

Firstly, I briefly extract Breivik’s discussion of the distinction between skydiving novices and experts, and the inauthentic living that results from the mastery of the apparatus by skydiving experts and carpentry experts.

Secondly, I present as counter-examples two extremely skillful and dangerous sports (aerial acrobatics and free solo climbing) that do not involve the use of protective ropes; and I argue that every performance of a high-skill dangerous sport expert hovers between life and death. The focus here is not on accidental death due to some equipment problem, but on the finitude of our being.

Finally, I show how the nature of excellent high-performance dangerous sports makes them more relevant to authentic living. I will explain the principle of ‘shì s rú guī’, which embodies Heidegger’s ‘being-towards-death’.

**Keywords:** Being and Time, Free Solo, Dasein, extreme sports.

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# The Primary Epistemic Value of Soccer Refereeing is Justification, Not Truth.

## Abstract

In this paper, I argue that when you look at the proper roles of the referee and the epistemic activity required of those roles, justification and not truth is the most important epistemic value in the activity of soccer refereeing. I argue that referees have three complementary roles that can sometimes be at odds with one another:

- (1) *investigator*, tracking game events; being in a position to detect/evaluate rule infractions;
- (2) *enforcer*, using discretion to penalize infractions pursuing fairness and consistency norms;
- (3) *game manager*, communicating with players and fostering the culture of the game.

Using three types of cases, I argue that truth is less apt than justification as the primary epistemic value of soccer referees. The first set of cases are cases where the truth is (and ought to remain) inaccessible to the referee because of the limits of human perception. These are cases—such as a very close goal kick or corner kick call—where there is a matter of fact that could be established, but determining that fact isn’t worth it because it would require superseding other roles of the referee (for example, it would take a long time to determine with accuracy).

The second set of cases are cases where there are multiple justifiable decisions that a referee can make such that the truth is indeterminate. Included in this set are handballs where the intention of the player must be determined if it is to count as an infraction as well as vague cases, which I argue many cases of offside and handball fall into.

The third set of cases are cases where I argue that good refereeing requires ignoring the truth. These are cases where a clear violation has occurred and the referee is in a good epistemic position to detect said violation, but discretion in enforcement is most apt for game management. Example cases can include a frustrated player in an important game using foul and abusive language towards the referee as well as some “make up” calls. I argue that cases exist where a referee would be justified in ignoring evidence of rule infractions and thereby ignoring the truth regarding an infraction for the sake of game management. Thus, justification is more important in soccer refereeing than truth.

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