

Tiger woods



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Yes, we all know the stories given to us by the news, media, and internet. Tiger Woods did wrong and shared his spotlight of shame and pain. True enough he was not liked by many, but who don't make mistakes? As an outsider that doesn't watch golf as much, I feel that time has passed and it can be forgiven.

For sake of an argument Tiger has won 95 tournaments, 71 of those on the PGA Tour, including the 1997, 2001, 2002 and 2005 Masters Tournaments, 1999, 2000, 2006 and 2007 PGA Championships, 2000, 2002, and 2008 U. S. Open Championships, and 2000, 2005 and 2006 Open Championships. With his second Masters victory in 2001, Tiger became the first ever to hold all four professional major championships at the same time.

He is the careervictories leader among active players on the PGA Tour, and is the careermoneylist leader. Not surprisingly, several of Tiger's sponsors have now opted to abandon their alliance with him, citing his moral indiscretions as sufficient justification for this decision. But is this the right thing to do?

Does the fact that Tiger Woods is not the high-quality person that we took him to be somehow negating the fact that he is an excellent golfer? Are we guilty of a category mistake if we suggest that Tiger's sponsorships, or his opportunities to play golf, should be taken away because of his ridiculous behavior? There are two ethical questions at work here. The first question is whether one should be punished in their professional life for actions in their personal life. The second is whether it is morally justified to break a contract because of immoral behavior.

I will here argue that the answer to the first question is no, while the answer to the second question depends on the nature of the contract. Some <https://assignbuster.com/tiger-woods/>

individuals, rightly appalled by Tiger's actions, have suggested that the PGA should punish him, perhaps by suspending him from future tournaments. There are two reasons for rejecting this suggestion. There is a strong precedent against doing so, and such a response threatens to unacceptably blur the line between the public and the private sphere.

Many famous people have committed scandalous actions that irreparably damage their public image. Kobe Bryant's recent Colorado rape trial is a prime example of this. But no one suggested that Kobe not be allowed to play basketball. Magic Johnson contracted HIV through extramarital sex, but he was treated with warmth and benevolence rather than scorn. Michael Jordan had a notorious gambling problem, but he is hailed as the greatest player of all time. Why should Tiger be treated differently? There is a more general concern with abandoning this precedent.

Golf is Tiger Woods's job. There is no expectation, or requirement of employment stating that one must be a good person in order to be a good golfer. We tend to think that whether one ought to be retained in a particular job position depends on whether they are qualified for the job, rather than whether they are a generally decent person. Suggesting that Tiger, Kobe, Magic, or Jordan should not be allowed to pursue their profession in virtue of their personal indiscretions would amount to a unique kind of discrimination.

From the standpoint of employment qualifications, one's sexual behavior is usually an irrelevant consideration. This brings me to the second consideration concerning punishment in one's professional life based on actions in one's personal life. We tend to think that there is an important separation between one's public life and one's private affairs. When one is a

celebrity like Tiger Woods, this line is blurred considerably, and one might claim that the loss of this distinction is the price one pays for fame.

However, this imposes an arbitrary constraint on a person's individual freedoms. If one has a right to the maintenance of a public and a private sphere, the fact that a person is famous is not obviously a reason for violating this right. The second ethical question raised by the Tiger Woods affair scandal concerns whether it is ethical to break a professional contract based on a person's actions in their personal life. This is a complicated question, and I will limit the discussion to one pertinent facet of it.

If Tiger Woods was hired as an endorser because of his public image and persona, and not merely because he is a good golfer, his sponsors are justified in abandoning their professional relationship for his personal actions. Consider the nature of the contract in question. Companies have hired Tiger because they believe an association with him will help them to sell their products. Tiger's role in the contract is presumably to maintain himself as a positive force for this purpose.

If Tiger has agreed to this type of relationship, anything he does that hinders his effectiveness as a marketing tool would be a violation of the contract. While we have reason not to punish Tiger professionally, as a golfer, for what he has done in his personal life, we also have reason to punish him professionally, as an endorser, for the same actions. Virtue ethics is somewhat helpful in understanding this distinction. Tiger's extramarital affairs do not make him a bad golfer, but they do make him a bad endorser.

Different standards are at work when we evaluate Tiger the golfer and when we evaluate Tiger the endorser, and only in the latter case does his personal

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conduct make a relevant difference. We have thus reached an interesting conclusion. First, standards of personal conduct are only relevant to one's professional life if the nature of one's profession dictates as much. This leaves us with a mixed evaluation of Tiger Woods. It seems we can endorse his lost endorsements, but not any punishment from the PGA, for his extramarital affairs. It also helps us to understand how other celebrity scandals have been perceived.

While Magic, Kobe, and Jordan are still good basketball players even though they are not particularly good people, someone like Bill Clinton harms his credibility as President in virtue of inappropriate personal conduct, because appropriate personal conduct is part of the President's job description (or so it would seem). Our own mixed reaction to Tiger suggests that he is somewhat unique, a mixture of celebrity and quasi-statesman that we want to hold to a higher standard of conduct, despite having no good reason to do so. References (PGA TOUR, Inc. , 2010) <http://www.pgatour.com/players/00/87/93/>