

Role of philosophy and ethics in sport



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Philosophy (from Greek φιλοσοφία, Philosophia, literally “love of wisdom”) is the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence. The academic discipline of philosophy exercises reason & logic to understand reality and answer fundamental questions about knowledge, life, morality, and human nature. Classical philosophical questions include: Is it possible to know anything and prove it? What is most real? What is the value of morals? [1] Some philosophers pose more concrete questions such as: Is there a best way to live? Is it better to be just or unjust? [2]

Modern philosophy has six branches of thought. Metaphysics, the nature of reality and the universe. Cosmology and ontology are the two branches of metaphysics. Cosmology explores the structure, origin, evolution and ultimate fate of the universe whereas Ontology concerns questions of what entities exist and can be said to exist. Before the development of modern science, Metaphysics was known as “natural philosophy”. Epistemology is the study of knowledge and how it is acquired, it is the branch of philosophy that addresses four main questions: 1) What is knowledge? 2) How is knowledge acquired? 3) What do people know? 4) How do we know what people know? Logic addresses how to develop valid arguments this includes mathematical logic and is the study of reasoning. Logic is split into two parts, inductive reasoning, and deductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning is a process of making broad generalizations from specific observations whereas deductive reasoning starts with “premises” assumed to be true and then works off the fact that if the “premises” are true what else could also be true. Ethics which is also known as moral philosophy is the study of right and wrong and how people should live. Politics, the study of government, citizen

rights and political obligations. Aesthetics explores beauty, art and artistic perception. It is more commonly scientifically defined as the study of sensory/sensory-emotional values “ judgements of self-taste”[3].

Ethics or moral philosophy is very relevant to sport and sports coaching. It is the rational study of the justification of moral claims.[4]Moral claims evaluate the “ rightness or wrongness” of a person’s character or person’s action, for example, the phrase “ lying is wrong” is a claim that to lie is wrong or the phrase “ you shouldn’t be lazy” claims laziness, a character trait, is wrong. Ethics is based around the concept of what we as humans think is wrong and right, this is also applicable as a coach and/or athlete.

Ethics is not only a major platform in general life but also in sport. It concerns our values as a coach, athlete, and team. It is also central to controversial issues in past and present sporting and coaching contexts such as cheating, drugs, corruption and gender equality. Sport and coaching is a major pathway in which we can help influence and educate ethics to our athletes and teams which we have seen can be detrimental for future life decisions, selection into higher/more elite teams or success of a sporting career. Through sport, individuals can develop morally; they can learn a basic code of ethics that is transferable to a moral code for life.[5]According to Kirk Hanson and Matt Savage (Santa Clara University, 2012) four components play into practicing good ethics in sports which are fairness, integrity, responsibility, and respect[6]. As a coach, athlete and team if you embellish moral claims such as respect and fairness the team culture/environment will be built on positive building blocks.

This is why as coaches we can be major contributors to the moral tone held in the sporting environment as athletes are receptive to the moral frame provided by the coach. This can be challenging for some coaches as some coaches' perspectives of morality have been associated with the way they face moral issues in the field (S. Pelaez). For example, if the coach reacts to the a " poor call" from the referee in an aggressive, ignorant manner, swearing or making abusive remarks that sends a message to his/her players that, that behaviour is normal/acceptable or a coach lying about an athletes education grades to enable him/her to be eligible to play tells the athletes lying is okay. These examples make emphasis on the outcome of the game/winning rather than how the game is played, which generally is the main reason for ethical issues in sport, winning.

Winning is the major motivation for ethical issues in sport and in life which is another reason why moral philosophy is highly relevant in sport. The oxford dictionary definition of winning is " gaining, resulting in, or relating to victory in a contest or competition"[7]. When playing sport, especially at a competitive level, winning is something that everyone wants to do.

Generally, we don't play or coach sport to lose. Winning is an incentive that sometimes will question our morals, values and what we think is right and wrong. We as a society are driven on winning, thirsty to attain status in our given codes that sometimes it throws our ethics out the window. For example, Lance Armstrong using performance-enhancing drugs to try to help win the Tour de France or New York Yankees Pitcher, Michael Pineda getting caught using pine tar, which helps pitchers grip the ball more easily, but the substance is banned by Major League Baseball[8]. Although these examples

are at a highly competitive level they share similarities with lower, club, school or province sporting levels.

Some coaches and teams will promote winning over excellence which leads me to how ethics has influenced my beliefs about coaching and how athletes learn both from a coach and player perspective. Joe Paterno, an American football player, director and coach once said “ There are many people, particularly in sports, who think that success and excellence are the same thing. They are not the same thing. Excellence is something that is lasting and dependable and largely within a person’s control. In contrast, success is perishable and is often outside our control. If you strive for excellence, you will probably be successful eventually. People who put excellence in the first place have the patience to end up with success.”(Good Reads, 2015). I agree with quote as it coincides with my beliefs around ethics in sport. Past, present and future sport promotes winning as the main or only goal, yes it is great to win and I know first-hand the amazing feeling that it brings but shouldn’t striving for excellence be promoted over winning? Excellence is something special, it is something that players can bring out within each other and then in time, success/winning will follow[9]. Winning doesn’t ensure quality performance, a team or athlete can perform well and still finish second best and conversely an athlete or team can perform poorly and still win. Promoting and practicing good ethics in a sporting context not only produces good athletes but also promotes a fun and safe environment. It is my belief that if you practice good ethics on the sports field as a coach or player you will also practice good ethics in life. Practicing what I believe to be good ethics and moral philosophy has impacted my coaching philosophy and

I hope that it is also interwoven into other coaches' philosophies as well.

Being a female that plays rugby, touch and hockey growing up sometimes I have had to voice my own ethics/values as both a player and coach which I believe has also impacted my coaching style and learning beliefs.

In conclusion, philosophy, especially ethics or moral philosophy is very relevant to sport and has played a big role in my perception of coaching and how athletes learn. In sport, just as in life our ethics are constantly being tested even when you don't know they are and, even if you think that you are morally perfect you aren't. As a coach, you probably have yelled or shook your head at a referees call or at a player's performance even if you didn't mean to. As a player, you probably would have gave your opposition a bit of "cheek" or claimed you scored a try or goal even if you weren't sure or knew you didn't.

References

[1]" Contemporary Skepticism. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy". www.iep.utm.edu. Retrieved 25 April 2016.

[2]" The Internet Classics Archive, The Republic by Plato". classics.mit.edu. Retrieved 25 April 2016.

[3]Gibney, E. (2012). Evolutionary Philosophy. Philosophy101. Retrieved from http://www.evphi.com/philosophy_101.html

[4]Leppin, D. (2010, January). What is Moral Philosophy? Retrieved from http://srjcstaff.santarosa.edu/~maparicio/philosophy/lessons/moral_philosophy.html

<https://assignbuster.com/role-of-philosophy-and-ethics-in-sport/>

[5]Coaching Philosophy and Ethics. (2010, August 1). Retrieved from USATF Level 2 School-Youth Specialization website: <https://www.usatf.org/groups/Coaches/education/schools/level2/2010/C10013365/YL2%20Materials/YL2%20Philosophy%20&%20Ethics.pdf>.

[6]Miller, Z. (n. d.). Coaching Principles and Ethics. Retrieved from Word Press website: <https://sites.psu.edu/millerzachary/coaching-philosophy/>

[7]Oxford English Dictionary. (1884). United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

[8]The Most Infamous Professional Sports Cheating Scandals . (n. d.). Retrieved August 2019, from Ranker website: <https://www.ranker.com/list/professional-sports-cheating-scandals/swiperight>

[9]Miller, Z. (n. d.). Coaching Principles and Ethics. Retrieved from Word Press website: <https://sites.psu.edu/millerzachary/coaching-philosophy/>