

Lesson 3: Sporting Behaviour

Introduction

All societies in the world are governed by a set of rules that have been decided upon by the society as a whole, their elected representatives, or the rulers of that society. These rules, known as the laws of the land, are necessary so that anarchy does not take hold.

In many instances, sport serves as a microcosm of society. It is necessary to have guidelines, rules, or regulations of the way a sport is to be played. These rules are pliable but become less flexible as sport moves from recreational physical activity to formal structures, such as sports leagues. It is essential that all teams involved at similar levels play by the same set of regulations. Even at the elite or professional level, however, opportunities must be available to change the rules of sport, whether by popular demand, for safety reasons, or for spectator and participant appeal.

The rules of sport, like the rules of society, are meant to satisfy the needs of the participants and spectators, and must be seen to be fair, equitable, and judicious; that is, they must include a set of consequences/penalties for a hierarchy of transgressions or deviant behaviour.

REFERENCE



For information on this topic, refer to the following website:

Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES). <www.cces.ca>.

For website updates, please visit Websites to Support the Grades 11 and 12 Curriculum at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/physlth/>.



Specific Learning Outcome

11.SI.3 Analyze sporting behaviours that may be positive and/or negative.



Key Understandings

- All athletes have the potential to be perceived as role models.
- Character can be enhanced through systematic teaching and demonstration of fair play and good sporting behaviour.
- Sport participants behave in positive and negative ways.



Essential Questions

1. How does sport build or reveal the positive or negative character of an individual?
How is character “learned”?
 2. How do athletes serve as role models for young sport competitors?
 3. What is the difference between sporting behaviour and deviant behaviour in sport?
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Background Information

Sporting behaviour is the term used to reflect sportsmanship, as it pertains to ethical behaviour, fair play, and respect for the sport, the participants, and the spectators. Elite athletes have become societal role models, whether or not they wish to carry this burden. In recent years, because of increased and instantaneous media attention, the behaviour of these athletes has come under society’s microscope, off as well as on the playing field, for every aspect of their lives. As a result, elite athletes seriously influence the moral and ethical development of children and youth of many societies.

Sport can also build character and personal qualities, such as courage, integrity, and the capacity to commit to a goal or purpose, as well as values such as a sense of responsibility to others, respect for others, self-discipline, a sense of fair play and fair dealing, and honesty.

For these reasons it is important that parents and particularly coaches have a good understanding of the positive values that the sporting experience is able to promote. Pointing out and rewarding the positive behaviours while discussing and discouraging the negative ones is every adult’s responsibility. Coaches and parents are role models too.

REFERENCE



For information on the skills, attitudes, and behaviours that sport builds, refer to the following report:

Bloom, Michael, Michael Grant, and Douglas Watt. “Chapter 6: Skills Impacts.” *Strengthening Canada: The Socio-economic Benefits of Sport Participation in Canada—Report August 2005*. Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada, 2005. Available on the Canadian Heritage, Sport Canada, website at www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/pubs/socio-eco/6_e.cfm.

For website updates, please visit Websites to Support the Grades 11 and 12 Curriculum at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/physhlth/.



Suggestion for Instruction / Assessment

The Athlete as Role Model

Many positive role models can be found in sport. As a class, discuss athletes who contribute to the improvement of our society and are living examples of the best qualities of our society. Have students respond to guiding questions such as the following:

- What qualities do these athletes represent?
- What other athletes come to mind when we use the term “role model”?

Examples of role models in sport are Cindy Klassen, Clara Hughes, Steve Nash, Todd MacCulloch, Terry Fox, and Rick Hansen.



Suggestion for Instruction / Assessment

The Marketable Athlete

Have each student reflect on “marketable” athletes by responding to the following questions:

- Identify a Canadian athlete who advertises products in the media.
 - What products does this athlete advertise?
 - Why did the company selling the product connect this athlete to it?
 - Think about the sports you watch on television. What other kinds of products do you see advertised by athletes during television commercials or in print media?
 - What traits make an athlete “highly marketable”? Why?
 - What sort of image does an athlete bring to products? Give examples of positive and negative sports images or sports figures.
 - Do these athletes have an impact on the consumer relative to personal values?
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Suggestion for Instruction / Assessment

An Athlete’s Creed

Have students create a creed (statement of belief) that reflects their personal views on sport participation. Students could also develop a creed for a local sporting event in the school or in the community and post it, where applicable. Have students compare and discuss the importance of their creed in the context of their own sport experience.

The Olympic Creed, for example, is meant to spur athletes to embrace the Olympic spirit and to perform to the best of their abilities. The words for this creed are attributed to Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, who got the idea for this phrase from a speech given by Bishop Ethelbert Talbot at a service for Olympic champions during the 1908 Olympic Games (Athens Info Guide; Canadian Olympic Committee).

THE OLYMPIC CREED

"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well" (Canadian Olympic Committee).

REFERENCES



For additional information, refer to the following website:

Athens Info Guide. "Olympic Games." *Tourist Information Guide on Athens Greece*.

<www.athensinfoguide.com/olympic.htm>.

Canadian Olympic Committee (COC). *Frequently Asked Questions*.

<www.olympic.ca/EN/faq.shtml>.

International Olympic Committee (IOC). "Olympians." *Athletes*.

<www.olympic.org/uk/athletes/olympians/index_uk.asp>.

For website updates, please visit Websites to Support the Grades 11 and 12 Curriculum at

<www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/physlth/>.



Background Information

Character Versus Sport Ethic

More often than not, the assumption is made that having good character also represents the dominant sport ethic. In other words, the athletes' behaviours are consistent with the behaviour norms that are applauded and praised by the sporting culture. Individual character and the prevailing sport ethic may, however, counter each other. Athletes who demonstrate and endorse the sport ethic are rewarded, while those who rebel find it difficult to be a part of the accepted society.

When athletes are exposed to various ethical dilemmas in sport over a period of time, they may eventually adopt unethical behaviours that are expected of them (e.g., hockey players may be expected to fight or to take penalties for their team). The behaviours are often reinforced and appreciated by the fans and media. Although the behaviours are accepted within the insular world of sport, they are often not acceptable in the world outside of sport. The newspapers and television are full of examples of athletes who have difficulty keeping the line clearly drawn between the world of sport and the world outside of sport.



Suggestion for Instruction / Assessment

The World of Sport

Have students find in the media (or create) two positive or negative examples of ethical issues in sport. These examples may pertain to issues related to gender fairness, violence, cheating, fair play, foul language, use of performance-enhancing drugs, being forced to play while injured, and so on.

Have students comment on each example using the following guiding statement/questions:

- Identify the ethical issue in the selected example and describe what was ethical and/or unethical about the example.
- Comment on whether or not the individual actions/character involved and the prevailing sport ethic supported or countered each other.
- Explain how the athletes/coaches will be treated as a result of their actions in each example.
- Comment on whether or not the behaviour was appropriate and justified. Explain.

The following are some examples of what students may find when they look at how athletes' behaviours are consistent with the behaviour norms that are applauded and praised by the sporting culture but are not necessarily considered good character.

EXAMPLES

Athletes' behaviours may be consistent with behaviour norms of sporting culture but may not reflect good character when they

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| ▪ strive for excellence | by cheating (e.g., using drugs, making dishonest line calls, tampering with equipment) |
| ▪ strive for excellence | by training to exhaustion and playing in pain |
| ▪ show love and respect for the game | by gloating (e.g., after a touchdown, hockey goal, slam dunk) |
| ▪ demonstrate being a team player | by risk-taking or demonstrating violence and aggression (e.g., fighting, "beanballing," stick smashing) |

REFERENCE



For additional information on character and sport, refer to the following website:

Goodcharacter.com. *Character and Sports*. <www.goodcharacter.com/Sports.html>.

For website updates, please visit Websites to Support the Grades 11 and 12 Curriculum at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/physhlth/>.



Background Information

Deviant Behaviour in Sport

The term *deviant behaviour* describes actions or behaviours that take place in sport that are outside expected or acceptable limits. This definition helps distinguish between behaviours that are governed within the rules of the sport and those that may be questioned, reviewed, or acted upon by the parent sport organization (e.g., National Hockey League) or by the judicial system.

Deviant behaviour in sport may include the following:

- **Rule breaking:** When rules are broken unintentionally during competition, or when rules are broken intentionally but the results are not severe, game officials make a ruling. Organizational or judicial intervention may become necessary when the rules are broken intentionally or result in great harm. The penalties or sanctions levied against the perpetrators range from heavy fines to lifetime bans in the sport, and, in some cases, result in criminal charges.
- **Emotional involvement:** Different levels of emotional involvement could also be considered deviant behaviour. In many countries, sporting events have evolved into avenues for emotional release and relief. Generally, the more important the event is, the greater the emotional expression becomes, whether it be joy, anger, wonderment, or sadness. Often the emotions are irrational and, in many instances, lead to violence, usually between opposing team spectators, but sometimes between opponents, athletes, and spectators, or even game officials. In any case, these actions are immature and antisocial, and are definitely not acceptable.



Suggestion for Instruction / Assessment

Rule Breaking

Using the Think-Pair-Share strategy (see Appendix E), students reflect individually and then in pairs about situations in sport where spectators/athletes have broken rules as a result of their frustration. Ask students to be prepared to discuss three examples in class.



Background Information

Off-Field Violence in Sport

Sports that involve body contact of any kind also involve violent acts. It has been suggested, although not substantiated, that watching or being involved in violent acts in sport may lead to deviant behaviour outside the sport venue. Is it possible that people who use physical intimidation and violence in sport are likely to exhibit these behaviours when faced with situations of conflict outside of sport? Consider the case of Tonya Harding (Olympic figure skater), who was involved with the attack on fellow skater Nancy Kerrigan.



Suggestion for Instruction / Assessment

Off-Field Violence in Sport

Develop statements related to violent behaviour for students to debate. Using the Opinion Corners learning strategy (see Appendix E), students take a position on an issue by going to the corner that most accurately depicts their viewpoint: strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, or disagree.

The following are examples of statements that could be debated by the class:

- An athlete who feels that his or her character is being challenged will often respond with physical force.
 - Male athletes (e.g., O. J. Simpson, Chris Benoit, Mike Tyson) are more frequently involved in violent acts against women than are male non-athletes.
 - Sport serves as a way to release aggression in an acceptable way and actually reduces violent tendencies in athletes and/or fans.
 - Parents promote violent behaviour of their children.
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Background Information

Performance Enhancement

Although performance-enhancing substances have been used for hundreds of years, this issue is becoming more prevalent in sport today. Athletes use many substances such as anabolic steroids, stimulants, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, amino-acid supplements, health foods, and natural herbs to gain an advantage over their competitors. Not all substances are illegal, but many are.



Suggestion for Instruction / Assessment

Athletes' Use of Performance-Enhancing Drugs

Have students work in groups of three to discuss questions regarding athletes' use of performance-enhancing substances. Ask each student in a group to take one of the following letters: A, B, or C. For the first round, A is the recorder, B asks C questions, and C answers the questions. B does not speak other than to ask the questions. C has one minute to answer questions. After the first round, have students rotate until each student has had an opportunity to be a recorder, ask the questions, and respond to the questions.

Sample questions could include the following:

- Name three athletes who have recently been caught using performance-enhancing substances.
- What should be the penalty for such actions?
- Why do athletes take performance-enhancing substances?



Background Information

Sport Gambling

What are the issues/problems with betting on sporting events? There are strict rules against players, coaches, and game officials being involved in gambling on the outcomes of sporting events in which they are involved. Gambling in sport has long been an issue, however. It is estimated that billions of dollars are spent around the world in illegal wagering in sport.

In Manitoba, it appears that gambling is a concern not only for adults, but also for youth:

Based on the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba's 2001 Youth Survey, close to 50% of students surveyed had gambled or bet on something during the past year. Gambling activities played by these youth include: scratch tickets (29.7%), bingo (18.2%), lottery tickets (16.6%), Sports Select games (14%), VLTs (11.3%), and slot machines (10.3%). (MAAW, "Wanna Bet . . . Fast Facts on Gambling")

REFERENCE



For additional statistics, refer to the following website:

Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week (MAAW) Committee. "Wanna Bet . . . Fast Facts on Gambling." *Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week: Resource Kit*. Winnipeg, MB: MAAW Committee, October 2007. 2.4.8 Gambling. Available online at www.afm.mb.ca/maaw/Resource_Kit/FastFacts/gamblingwantabet.pdf.

For website updates, please visit Websites to Support the Grades 11 and 12 Curriculum at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/physhlth/.



Background Information

Does Sport Build Character?

The term *character* refers to a person acting in accordance with his or her own morals and beliefs. How a person is socialized as a child determines, to a large extent, what the person values, and this includes the elements of trustworthiness, honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring. When athletes behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the way they normally behave it is said that they are acting “out of character.” Why are there so many examples of athletes acting “out of character”?



Suggestion for Instruction / Assessment

The Time to Act—Or Not!

Ask students to brainstorm, in small groups, the reasons why they think that some athletes (e.g., professional, amateur) demonstrate poor sporting behaviour. Have students test their attitude toward sporting behaviours by responding to the scenarios presented in RM 4-SI.



Refer to RM 4-SI: Moral Dilemmas in Sport.

RM 4–SI: Moral Dilemmas in Sport

The fundamental nature of positive sporting behaviour is a commitment to compete within the letter and spirit of the rules, to treat the game itself and all participants with respect, and to be gracious in both victory and defeat. For many sport participants and spectators the dilemma is to know what is cheating or what is just a part of the game.

Here are 14 scenarios that test your attitude toward sporting behaviours. Identify each of the behaviours described in the scenarios below as one of the following:

C - Cheating

P - Part of the Game

Be prepared to support your choices.

Scenarios	C	P
1. To get a needed time out, a coach instructs a soccer player to fake an injury.		
2. After every score, a basketball player taunts the defender in an effort to “psyche him or her out.”		
3. To gain an edge, a golfer illegally alters equipment.		
4. A baseball coach instructs a pitcher to throw the ball at the other team’s best batter’s head to brush the batter back from the plate.		
5. To motivate players, a coach uses foul language and insults.		
6. In basketball, a player commits a deliberate foul to stop the clock in the final minute of play.		
7. In soccer, a coach teaches players to grab and hold shirts illegally without being detected.		
8. In volleyball, a player says nothing after a referee erroneously says the player never touched the ball.		
9. To set a new scoring record, a football team facing a badly overmatched opponent runs up the score to 96-7.		
10. In baseball, a fielder traps the ball against the ground, but tries to convince the umpire that he or she caught it cleanly.		
11. A wrestling coach instructs an athlete to attack a recent injury of the opponent.		
12. In ice hockey, a coach sends in a player to instigate a fight with the other team’s top scorer.		
13. In a close tennis match, the referee calls a sideline shot you have made “in.” You know it was out but don’t say anything.		
14. You are fouled in a close basketball game with the time running out. The coach calls you and another teammate over and instructs the other player to go to the shooting line in your place.		
15. Other		