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This chapter has been adapted from a journal article by the authors above. The module team's editing has highlighted the need for coaches to consider their central role in modelling the moral virtues of sport and shaping the character of those they coach. It goes beyond a coach's role as offering technical or tactical advice and challenges coaches to consider their own biographical reference points to help inspire ethical behaviour and enthusiasm for sport.

Introduction

In this paper, we argue that sport provides the opportunity to realise a range of technical, physical and moral excellences. In order for it to do so it is necessary to pay equal attention to both the inherent morality of sports structures and the moral agency of the coach. It means that the coach, as a central part of the sports milieu, has moral responsibilities. Such moral responsibilities extend beyond policing foul play, teaching good manners and inculcating a raft of 'fair play conventions', to the cultivation and fostering of certain virtues which are directly implicated in the realisation of the value of sport.

Despite palpable differences between elite and recreational sport, real noteworthy normative constraints at the heart of the activity provide a universal condition of its practice which cut across how each and every coach ought to behave (Morgan 1994, 215). The ethical arguments underlying this claim are perhaps less familiar and more controversial to coaches (but no less important) than the moral arguments that support formal interventions dealing with specific issues such as child welfare, sexual abuse and performance enhancing drug issues. But our view is that in all matters of central importance, in word and through deed, the coach should behave well, set good examples and be committed to the goods or properties that make sport uniquely valuable.

Sport, coaching and 'initiation' into social practice

Coaching practice, both in relation to the ethical conduct of coaches and the development of the character of athletes, can be informed greatly by Aristotelian ethics. Indeed, the work of the Aristotelian philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (1985) has been used extensively in the literature to conceive of sport as a social practice (Jones 2001, 2003).

The notion of goods internal to practices such as sport provides the cornerstone of [MacIntyre's] theory of a practice. Internal goods represent the goals of participation, but also by implication specify limited technical and normative ways of achieving these goals. These internal goods are the precious gems of sport participation. They are what make sports unique and special. The strength, poise, tactical acumen, agility, dexterity, speed of thought and movement required of the volleyball player, for example, represents, at the same time, what is strived for and what is valuable.

On the basis of MacIntyre's understanding of sport as a practice, the initiation of persons into sport and to the achievement of its internal goods should be the main priority of the coach. The coach must aim at assisting and encouraging his or her charges to attain these goals or goods to their fullest potential. Achieving these goods in volleyball (and all sports) demands that volleyball be played in a particular way. For example, dexterity and anticipation are futile if the ball is not spiked cleanly over the net. The player must have courage to play the shot taking into account the possible risks (being blocked, missing the target, sustaining an injury and so forth), strike the ball cleanly and honestly thus preserving the just nature of the contest. To win a point by a poor or illegal technique is not to fully experience the satisfaction of the internal goods. It may, of course, be the case that a player gains satisfaction from winning the point by fair means or foul, but such a player is not displaying the virtues of honesty or justice and the source of their satisfaction cannot, we argue, be the internal goods.

The temptation of money, fame and fortune according to MacIntyre (1985) leads to shortcuts, cheating, deception, and a win-at-all-costs attitude (e.g. Maradona's hand of god deception). The virtues mentioned above play an important role in staving off these corrupting external influences. The coach then, in assisting athletes to fulfil their

potentialities within sport, has a responsibility to foster a strong character who is just, honest and courageous enough to withstand the temptations that arise through commercial excess.

The important implication of MacIntyre's account is that moral character virtues remain central to realising the essential value of sporting practices for, without them, sports are reduced to radically impoverished instrumental activities.

Character

We have argued that moral virtue is central to the authentic sport experience. Fostering such virtue, however, is by no means a straightforward task. A good starting place for surmounting difficulties is to recognise that the focus of ethical reflection and evaluation of both athletes and coaches is to develop character. What are needed are (morally) good coaches and (morally) good athletes. Developing good character, for both athletes and coaches, is a complex process that includes education, training, instruction, reflection, practice experience and emulation.

It is a complex process because character is complex. Character includes habits of perception, cognition, emotion and action. Doing the right thing involves much more than knowing the right thing. Moral perception implies a certain sensitivity or level of attention to particular morally salient features. This sensitivity is not innate neither can it be an a priori or assumed human faculty. Sensitivity is learnt. Similarly, knowing the good from the bad, the right from the wrong, the fair from the unfair, involves learning about human relationships, social conventions, moral rules, as well as professional and role-specific obligations. But this knowledge in itself, as we have already mentioned, is insufficient, and some may argue, not even necessary for moral action. Learning to feel a certain way, for example, about a certain act is a crucial precursor for moral action. Where unfortunate cases of bullying in sport have taken place both coaches and athletes ought to feel outraged, for appropriately morally educated persons should register some form of emotional disturbance in light of such dubious behaviour. An example of the moral complexities that surround the coaching process can be seen in the case of the UK's former national swimming performance director, Bill Sweetenham, who was cleared of bullying

allegations in 2005 (BBC 2006). Despite the outcome, the case prompted much reflection in sport as a whole as to the limits of coaches' actions in the pursuit of improved performance.

A crucial task for the coach is to realise there is a moral dimension to sport, which is innate, and difficult to master. By doing so, coaches should focus greater attention on the ethical implications of their coaching values and actions and in particular how such values and behaviours are recognised, understood and impact upon those they wish to influence.

Sport coaching and emulation

The coach is uniquely situated to influence and set examples. While significant others, such as fellow participants, officials, parents and peer group play an important role in establishing one's overall moral point of view, the coach controls and largely directs the ethical agenda and sets the moral outlook. As such, it is an inescapable fact that coaches are role models (Morgan and Carpenter 2002; McNamee, Jones, and Duda 2003). This entails that the coach will be emulated by children and may see this as a deliberate aspect of their practice, particularly with regard to mirroring the technical and tactical dimensions of sport – players will be anxious to follow their coach's instructions, game plan and technical expectations. However, the coach may have very little control over which aspects of their behaviour or character register with children and so emulation may mean that children will copy unintended and unappealing behaviours which may, in turn, come to be habits of character. The coach, in executing their professional role cannot, therefore, be separated from the character of the person in that role. In other words, 'at every working moment the teacher [read coach] is indirectly sending out a moral message' (Kristjansson 2006, 38). Coaches who constantly berate their players for mistakes should not be surprised that, when errors occur, their players begin to display the same *modus operandi* towards one another. Similarly, to operate inconsistently or to send the 'do as I say not as I do' are risky strategies; risks that good coaches should not take. A coach must strive for good and consistent exemplification of fairness, magnanimity, justice, honesty and so forth. If we want children to develop virtues like magnanimity, honesty and fairness, the coach must embody these virtues in their actions.

Sports coaching and virtue ethics: practical implications

Given the need for virtue in the realisation of the values of sport and the central claims we make about the coach's character, a number of important implications follow. The coach is likely to confront a number of key issues which can be expressed in terms of three crucial questions. The first involves asking what kind of a person a coach should be in terms of their character, personality and disposition. The second asks how a coach should act and behave. The third and final question involves questioning the goals and values of coaching and, in particular, entails clarifying the moral values and aims that shape sport itself.

What kind of person should a coach be?

A virtue approach to coaching suggests that those who coach are individuals who, at their core, conduct their lives consciously as moral agents. Jones, Armour, and Potrac's (2004) work with elite coaches [portrayed] coaches as committed, caring and conscientious practitioners who invested high levels of energy and time into their work. In this respect, they appeared to live out their coaching roles vicariously, realising their 'selves' within it. It was a sentiment best expressed by Lois Muir, former coach of the world netball championship winning Silver Ferns (the New Zealand national team); '...you've got to give everything. . . a total commitment of your energy' (Jones, Armour, and Potrac 2004, 87).

A coach's inheritance – their biology, where and when they were born, their own experiences in sport, how they were coached themselves (if at all) and who or what inspired them to become a coach – all matter. Everything that a coach thinks and does is tethered to their lived historicity – an amalgam of biological, sociological and cultural influences and experiences. Consequently, coaches should develop a self-understanding of their own personal sporting narratives as it will assist them to recognise and acknowledge how various physical influences have either constrained or broadened their lives. Drawing on one's sporting inheritance provides a means for reflecting on one's coaching preferences, biases and basic philosophy (Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac 2004). Coaches should recognise through self-awareness how their ideas, hopes and desires, together with their emotional and psychological state of being, all affect their personality, character, and self-identity. We therefore advocate a shift of emphasis from thinking about the coach as a repository of theoretical and applied knowledge to one that emphasises a person's behavioural qualities.

As a result, rather than considering coaches as performance technicians, they might be better seen as persons who define themselves by their values, integrity and character (Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac 2004).

How should a coach act and behave?

A dominant approach to coaching [is] one that involves interventions prompted by technical or tactical aspects of a performance compared to a perceived performance ideal (Jones 2007).

Though this causal approach is helpful, coaching should also include an understanding of the process which is more focused on the athlete as a person than on the end performance itself. A more holistic, value-based approach to coaching begins with the idea that each athlete has a unique character. In this regard, advocating a coach-athlete relationship which sees each performer as an individual person is common to many coaching philosophies. However, as such relationships are often driven by an imperative to analyse physical movements in order to assess a player's performance, such relationships are impoverished. An athlete's character is not about technical and tactical strengths and weaknesses, and can never be wholly revealed in an ability to 'cope' with the rigors and demand of competitive sport. Instead, understanding character involves discerning such things as an individual's hopes and fears, their aptitudes, skills and abilities, as well as what kind of perceptions they have about possibilities and constraints. So, in addition to a parade of mechanistic motor performances, a coach should pay heed to those qualities within athletes that emerge because of their character. We, therefore, contend that a key coaching quality should involve the capacity to listen to and engage with an athlete's personal attempt at self-construction and representation. Mindful of Burke's (2001) critique of the development of 'trust' as a coaching virtue, the cultivation of an appropriate coach-athlete relationship ought to avoid the extremes of over-paternalistic dependence on the one hand and disinterested neglect on the other. A virtue based approach to coaching involves finding out who the unique individual behind the athlete is, and what makes him or her 'tick', primarily because such a view prioritises persons as ends in themselves and not just as a means to a (sporting) end. This approach may provide a better way of responding to the particular

needs of 'troubled' sportspersons such as George Best, Paul Gascoigne, Jennifer Capriati and Marcus Trescothick.

The upshot for coaches is that how they behave and what they say outside immediate coaching contexts may be just as influential as technical and tactical information imparted during a coaching session. Coaches need to recognise that the impact they may have on players extends into a much greater range of situations than they might think. Thus, informal interactions with parents, players, and officials are all included in the store of interactions on which one's overall personality and character as a coach is presented and judged. Consequently, not only will the coach need to consider those actions and behaviours intended to have a transforming effect, but also those actions which may have unintended consequences.

Coaches who care about sports and exemplify their concern through their actions and behaviour are more likely to ensure that young players will also value the pursuit of particular kinds of goods and virtues of sport (Jones 2009).

A coach's attempt to habituate particular forms of behaviour in players is best started early. The importance of repetition and the inculcation of (morally) good practice conventions may be furthered through re-structuring the outcomes of sporting activities. For example, presenting competitive games in ways that emphasise the importance of good and proper play rather than winning or losing help to establish the acquisition of moral goods and values as essential features of participation. This might entail that in addition to technical and tactical concerns, one's coaching goals also aim at impacting the character of players, their standards of behaviour, dispositions towards the goods of the game, and respect for one's opponents.

The coach, therefore, will need to develop skills in identifying what constitutes each individual athlete's character and moral disposition. They will need to be aware and address whether, for example, a team player needs to be more or less selfish in their play in order to develop greater responsibility or less egotism respectively. This means that in addition to drills that challenge players' technical and tactical abilities, coaches will need to know how

to provide opportunities that challenge aspects of moral behaviour in ways that inculcate and develop desirable traits and virtues.

A key pre-requisite for the coach, who has the development of meaning and habituation as their goal, is to ensure that players are inspired and engaged when they practice and play. Coaches who provide a holistic understanding of the practice, through embedding their coaching with iconic reference points, by describing the excellences of the greatest players and the excitement and awe from witnessing memorable games, end up telling their players that this game is more than a hobby or a pastime, but a way of life. So when a young cricketer comes home from a coaching session having been told by his coach that he spun the ball like Warne, it creates in that player a desire to find out just who Shane Warne is (or was), developing an intrinsic engagement with cricket.

Conclusion

This account of virtue ethics suggests that coaching ought to entail, an outlook that embraces sensitivity towards moral obligations. In adopting such a stance, we have argued for a multi-dimensional and highly nuanced understanding of coaching as a process of moral development of persons. We have argued that sport practices require attention to the pursuit of particular kinds of goods that necessarily demand judgments that are of a moral nature and, thereby, provide its practitioners with the opportunity to cultivate particular kinds of moral virtues. When such behaviours are habituated over time through repetition, and refined and adjusted through reflection, the formation of one's sporting character is likely to take shape. Emulation of moral exemplars play a crucial role in this process and, as coaches are central, they have a pivotal role to play in the moral education of those who come under their care.

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