

## Learning Ethical Theory Through a Debate on Artificial Performance Enhancement Management

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**Session 18: Teaching  
Workshop (75-minute)**

**Friday, June 1, 2007**

**2:00 PM - 3:15 PM**

One of the most hotly contested and controversial ethical issues in sport for many years has been the topic of performance enhancing substances. Sport managers are intimately involved in this issue, whether it be through policy implementation, control, or education. Therefore, it seems appropriate that sport management students should be equipped with the knowledge surrounding this ethical issue. A debate is one form of classroom teaching that allows students to apply theory to practice and participate in critical thinking. The objective of this workshop is to involve participants in a debate that could be used in a classroom setting to assist students in learning ethical theory and forming managerial philosophy on drug control and artificial performance enhancement.

In this workshop, participants will first be presented with the following three ethical approaches derived from DeSensi and Rosenberg (2003) and Malloy, Ross and Zakus (2003).

**Deontology:** This behavior is based upon what is right (e.g., Kantianism-moral decisions arise out of a sense of duty rather than to produce a desired result). The following questions guide deontology-driven decision making: Has a law, a rule, a policy, or a procedure been broken? Is it a bad law, rule, policy, procedure that ought to be broken or changed? Was the individual duty followed?

**Teleology:** This behavior is based upon what is good (e.g., utilitarianism for the group and hedonism for the individual). The following question guides teleology-driven decision making: Does the dilemma prevent ends from being achieved for the group or for the individual?

**Existentialism and virtue ethics:** This behavior is based upon what is authentic (i.e., being true to yourself without regard for rules and outcomes). The following questions guide existentialism and virtue ethics-driven decision making: Is there a restriction upon the individual's or a group's freedom? Do individuals take seriously the idea of developing personal excellence?

Participants will form three teams representing deontological, teleological and existential/virtue ethics points of view in preparation for a debate. Participants will then be presented with three ethical questions surrounding performance enhancing substances: a) what is currently ethical? b) what will be ethical tomorrow? and c) what can and should sport managers do? The three teams will answer the three questions and defend their solutions from their philosophical perspectives during three rounds of debate.

**Issue 1.** What is currently ethical? Despite substantial investments in testing around the world, many athletes currently use performance enhancing substances (Mertzman, 2000). Athletes' natural body processes may be manipulated (e.g., one's own blood may be magnetically and light treated and re-loaded before competitions). Genes may be injected to provide high levels of hemoglobin. Some sport scientists (Kofman, Portugalov & Shustin, 2005) have recommended that athletes focus their preparation for the Beijing Olympics on: (a) optimal adaptation to clima-geographic and social conditions of the Games; (b) decreased athlete body recovery time in training and competition periods; and (c) increased overall functional and specialized productivity by using pharmaceutical and bioactive supplements (particularly from Chinese medicine), stem and embryonic cells, and barotherapy (normobaric hypoxia and hyperbaric oxygenation).

**Debate Questions for Issue 1:** Are all the above enhancement methods ethical (e.g., pharmaceutical and bioactive supplements, stem cells, barotherapy, blood re-load, gene injection)? If some are not ethical, then why?

**Issue 2.** What will be ethical tomorrow? By the mid-21st century, our intelligence and bodies are expected to become increasingly nonbiological (Kurzweil, 2005). Nanobots would travel through the bloodstream in our bodies and brains. In our bodies, they would destroy pathogens, correct DNA errors, eliminate toxins, and perform other tasks to enhance physical performance (e.g., robotic red blood cells may enable one to go hours without oxygen). In our brain, the nanobots would interact with neurons to connect our biological thinking with the nonbiological computerized intelligence to enhance mental power (Kurzweil, 2005). We would also be able to correspond specific situations, thoughts, and feelings with activation of

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particular genes and behaviors (Brockman, 2002). By the end of the 20th century, we learned to replace many parts of our body and change gender. Disabled and injured athletes may now use reconstructed joints, bones, and hearts. People may undergo sex changes and compete in sport.

Debate Questions for Issue 2: Will the above enhancement methods be ethical (e.g., DNA correction, enhancement of brain functioning through implantation and computerized intelligence, genetic psychology)? Which methods may become acceptable and even required as part of medical service to athletes when genetic and nanoengineering will be allowed to augment and replace all our organs (Kurzweil, 2005)? What would be the contractual and broader legal implications for sport managers?

Issue 3. What can and should sport managers do? Because current doping control systems are not always effective, and some doping methods are hard or impossible to detect (e.g., injection of genes to provide high levels of hemoglobin), some suggest legalizing drugs in sport (Mertzman, 2000). Others argue that athletes then will be taking drugs at an early age, with disastrous health effects. It seems that any new substances or methods available to practitioners (e.g., medical doctors) become automatically available to athletes. With increasing personal and economic freedoms internationally, it is difficult to see how legal, administrative and moral systems will keep new performance enhancement methods under control. However, new methods lacking expert validation require particularly careful regulation.

Debate Questions for Issue 3: Which enhancement methods should be allowed and disallowed? How could sport managers use the ability of sport to influence social morals, structures and institutions? Which managerial solutions would you suggest?

The debate will be facilitated by two moderators. One will keep time while the other will provide scoring and feedback on the debate dynamics after each of the three rounds. Both moderators will provide prompts to stimulate and direct the discussion. Each round will consist of a presentation by each of the three teams, cross-team critique and discussion, and referee feedback. The workshop will conclude with a discussion on the nuances of using the debate as a teaching method in the classroom.

### References

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