



# WHEN ETHICS AND SPORT COLLIDE

## We're all on the same team

### Sports Without Borders 2014

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PRESENTED BY PIPPA GRANGE, BLUESTONE EDGE



# ETHICS AND SPORT

- Ethics guide the behaviours and choices we make.
- You can foster an ethical framework without compromising winning.
- Being ethical is not always a clear decision between right or wrong.

# THE MEANING OF SPORT

The value or meaning of sport has been clouded by a focus on:

- Win at all costs attitude (in elite and grassroots).
- Pressure to succeed (from parent/coach/club).
- Doing whatever it takes to make it to the top.

Let's look at the good, the bad and the ugly . . .

# ETHICS AND SPORT; THE GOOD

Increased awareness and actions in sport re:

- **Anti-homophobia** ('If you can play' campaign and recent cross code policy support).
- **Inclusion** (increased focus on Indigenous, CaLD, gender and disability issues).

- **Anti-racism** ('Racism. It stops with me' campaign).



# ETHICS AND SPORT; THE BAD

- Increase in betting and match fixing scandals (cricket, English football and Vic Southern Stars).
- Increase in violence and abuse from parents of grassroots' players/referees/officials.

- Ongoing doping and use of PEDs (Sochi 2014 – most positive drugs tests of any Winter Olympics).



# ETHICS AND SPORT; THE UGLY

- The best known case of ethical failure in sport over the last 10 years.
- I discuss this case in my new book and how it could be framed using ethical theories.

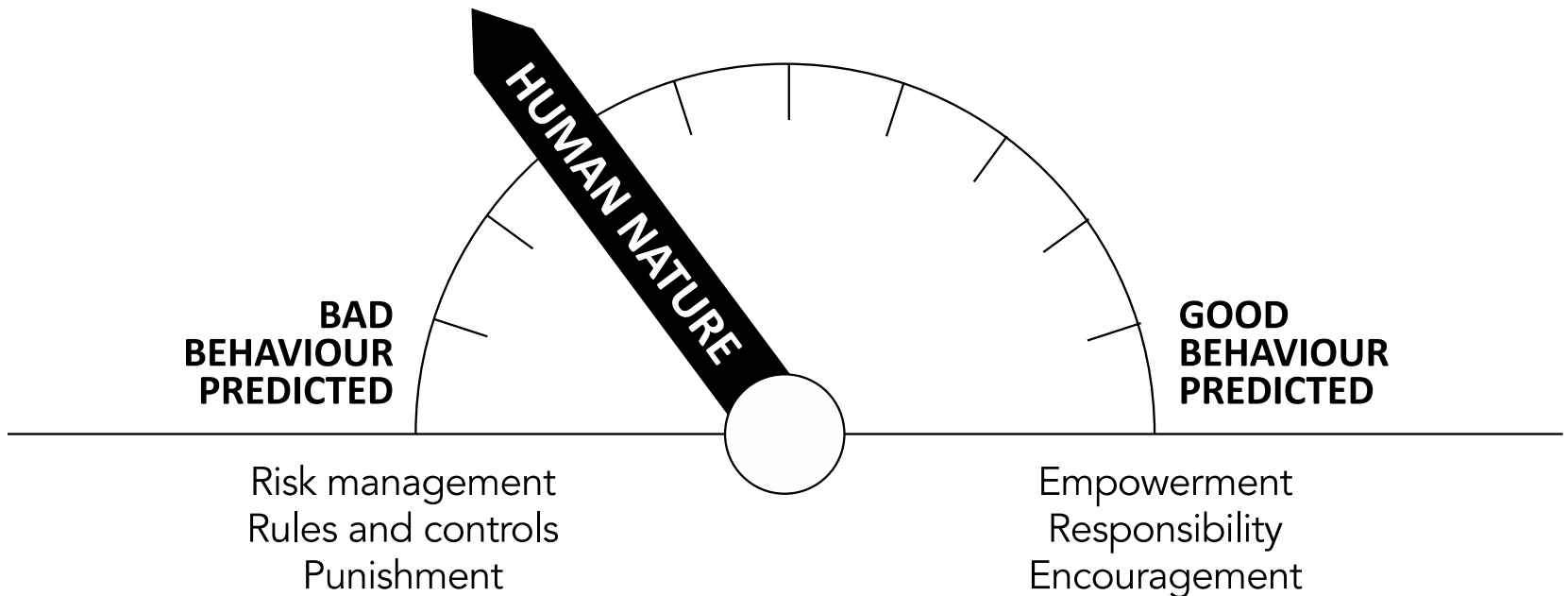


- Lance Armstrong says I'm still the Tour de France winner.



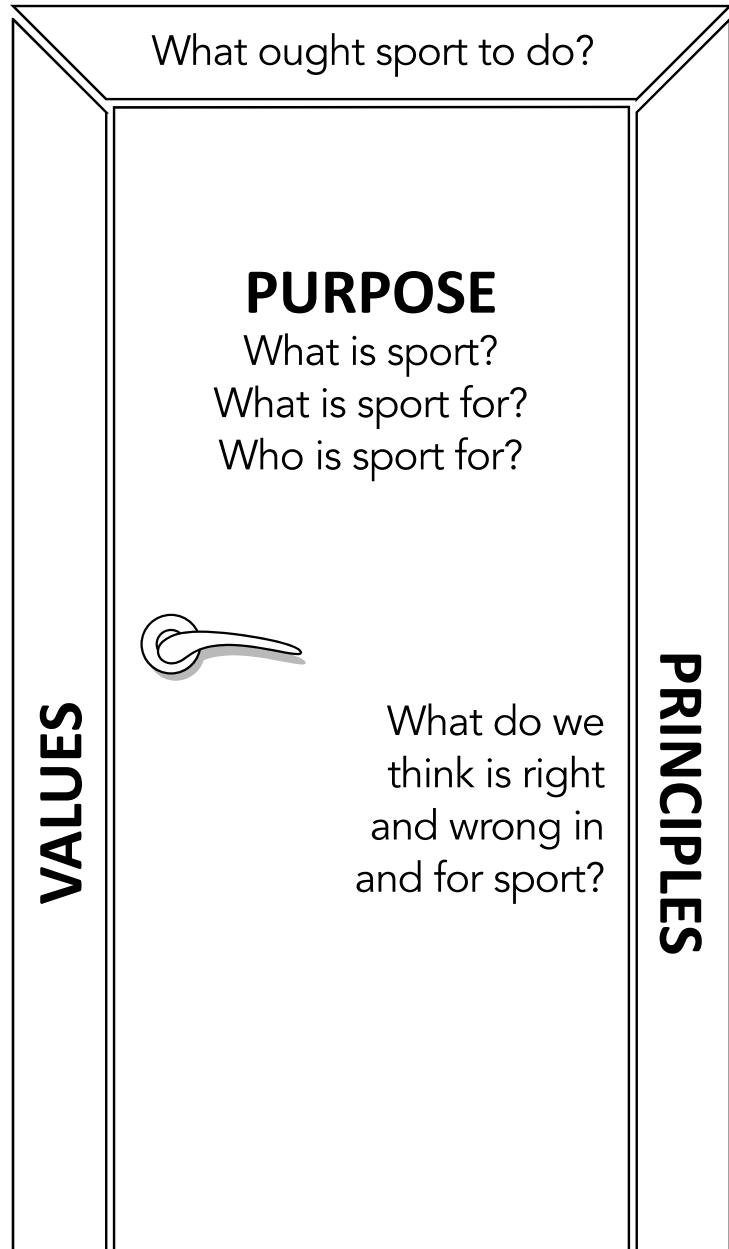
# TALKING ETHICS

The way modern sport is thinking about ethics.



# ANOTHER VIEW

What do we think is good and desirable in and for sport?



What do we think is right and wrong in and for sport?

# USING A FRAMEWORK

When an organisation or team really considers what it exists to do – not just this year but in an enduring sense – and for whom it exists (purpose), what it stands for and what it won't stand for (values, principles, beliefs), what its commitments and promises are, it is usually easier to navigate with integrity when value conflicts and dilemmas come up....and they will!

# WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

Example 1 – To walk or not to walk?  
Adam Gilchrist and Stuart Broad.



Moral duty  
or  
team duty?

# WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

Example 2 – What is ‘performance enhancement’ anyway? Double standards?

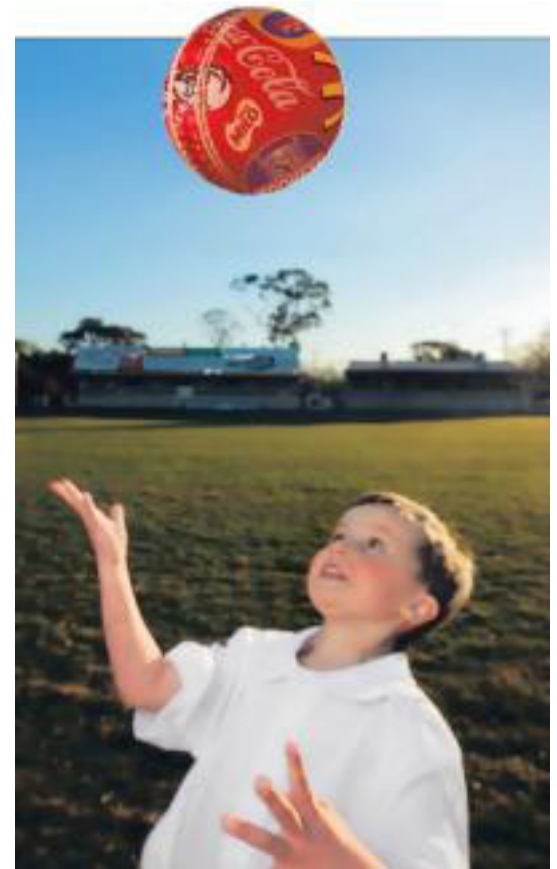


Coffee/EPO -  
legal or  
illegal?

# WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

Example 3 –  
Grassroots sport  
supporter or exploiter?

Fast food companies -  
helping fund kids' sport  
or promoting obesity?



# NO TRADE-OFF

An organisation with a sound culture does not choose between ethics and winning; it lives at 'the junction'.



# TALKING LEADERSHIP

Forget the perfect, unblemished leader with no 'black marks' morally – everyday will and skill counts most.

Ethical leadership is LIVE!

# THE SPIRIT OF THE LEADER

There are boundaries to authority in sport, but not to ethical leadership. It is impossible to say “it’s not my job to work out the right thing to do”.

We cannot ‘outsource’ ethics in sport to the boss/coach/captain/referee etc.

# LEADERSHIP BRAND

- What do you lead?
- What do other people think you lead?
- Who are you when you lead?
- What are you known for?
- What do you influence?
- Do you ever take the ethical leadership hat off?
- Can you say you are the same under pressure?

# MORAL COURAGE IN LEADERSHIP



**NBA bans Clippers'  
Donald Sterling for life for racist  
comments**

Commissioner Adam Silver says  
he will urge League's Board of  
Governors to force team's sale

# SLIPPERY SLOPES

Unthinking customs and habits can get in the way of ethical leadership in sport.

Sometimes we do not see them.

Sometimes we might not want to see them.

But the standard you walk past is the standard you accept...

Check out these high risk excuses for not acting.

# “FREE-SPEECH” TRAP

- “It is my right to say what I want” is often invoked as a misuse of a principle in sport when it comes to issues of discrimination.
- Is it OK to scream obscenities and abuse from the sidelines?
- Is it OK from behind closed doors to express hateful sentiments that denigrate and disrespect other people on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability?
- The reason this moves into ethical territory is because it is injurious in nature; it hurts people. You may be free to say it, but that doesn’t necessarily mean it is right.

# “TAKE LIFE TOO SERIOUSLY” TRAP

- Designed to minimise unethical conduct by dismissing it as just a bit of fun, casual banter, or lighthearted humour.
- Humour often involves some irreverence, but there is a big difference between being “cheeky” and showing deep disrespect and contempt that normalise hatred, exclusion, and discrimination. Lighthearted humour can be either of these.

# “NO-CHOICE” TRAP

- When people say they had to behave unethically because they had no choice.
- When a rookie athlete says she had no choice but to use a banned substance in her sport because her coach said she must or he would not be able to select her, the excuse is just that, an excuse. We might feel sympathy recognising the coach’s abuse of his power to meet his own needs, but there was a choice and in this case the athlete valued selection more than she valued not cheating.



# “NO HARM, NO FOUL” TRAP

- The idea that even though technically a breach of a code or a law may have occurred, there is no need for punishment, apology, or retribution as no actual damage resulted.
- This excuse can be used to justify discriminatory behaviour in sport; “He wasn’t particularly offended by the racial slur so what’s the problem?” or “her performance wasn’t actually improved by the drug so no harm was done”.

# “IT WAS A GOOD CAUSE” TRAP

- An end-justifies-the-means rationalisation for behaving badly in pursuit of an outcome that is seen as a good thing. Often though the action taken has been covert, unspoken, or covered up in some way and the desired outcome, or “good cause” is self-serving.
- A classic example of this was the stolen medical records case in Australian Rules Football in 2007.

# “THE KING’S PASS” TRAP

- Presumes that the special status of a person, as a celebrity or leader, powerbroker, or superstar high achiever somehow earns them a more lenient ethical standard.
- A classic sports example of this is the all-powerful president, chairperson, or owner of a sports club getting away with bullying behaviour, or social misconduct that would be admonished in a more junior staff member, or the lack of action on the conduct of a very influential patron or donor who nobody is keen to get offside, because there is too much to lose.

# IN SUMMARY

- If sport is an ‘empty container’, what substance do we want to fill it with?
- What do you want sport to mean in your own backyard?
- What ‘win’ is beyond the scoreboard for your sport?