

Chapter 24

Values-Based Coaching: The Role of Coaches in Moral Development

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Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight ways in which coaches can support moral development in their athletes through Values-Based Coaching (VBC). That is, by placing ethicality, excellence (i.e., of character and thought), and empowerment (i.e., the Three E's) at the forefront of their practice. In providing a theoretical framework that explains the interactive processes that influences coach-athlete moral development and how the moral atmosphere may be [co-]constructed, the present chapter provides a foundation from which researchers can understand and explain the creation of normatively appropriate, morally enhancing, and empowering coaching environments. Our attention then focuses on the tangible processes that may be used to aid the development of the Three Es within both individuals and groups. It is hoped that by enhancing our understanding of the Three Es, coaches may be better supported in their endeavors to promote moral development and empower athletes to stay engaged in sport. Furthermore, in presenting a theoretical framework, it is expected that the present chapter will initiate discussion around normative standards.

Values-Based Coaching: The Role of Coaches in Moral Development

Sport is in many ways, a dress rehearsal for life; be it receiving feedback, learning about one's roles, responsibilities, obligations, and expectations; developing discipline, organization, and communication skills; or experiencing the highs of victory or the lows of defeat. As a social context capable of impacting others' rights and wellbeing, sport also represents an important setting for the development of ethical thought and action (Bandura, 1991). Despite this important function, few have sought to study why some in sport value development over winning, service over self-enhancement, empowerment over domination, and care over abuse. Fewer still have sought to examine how the personal values people hold and the cultural values they operate within shape attitudes and behavior. Sagiv et al. (2017) define values as what is good and worthy. Cultural values are those that represent the goals of a social collective and are thought to guide and justify social behavior (Schwartz et al., 2012). Personal values are the value systems individuals hold and are viewed as guiding principles that both influence goals and direct intentions to act. Personal values both shape and are shaped by preferences and behavior over time and across situations (Schwartz et al., 2012). In sport, values are co-constructed by those who play, coach, officiate, parent, and dictate the policy, prepare the kit and equipment, cook the food, support the hurt, and cheer from the sidelines.

Sport provides opportunities for those on and off the field to experiment with ethical norms and test the limits of their personal value system (McFee, 2004). Be it the player taking a dive, the parent abusing an official or the fan acting violently, the sporting environment often acts as a form of naturalistic moral laboratory (McFee, 2004). Whilst sport may act as a moral laboratory, contrary to popular opinion, it is unlikely that sport, in as of itself, is a teacher. Sport merely provides opportunities for moments of implicit or explicit learning. It is how we think and act in such moments, that, over time, shape who we are. For learning to happen, a level of reflection needs to occur in which the participants of sport are able to evaluate their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Bandura, 1986). As Durant (2012) notes, "we [do] not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but rather because we have acted rightly, virtues are formed through our actions" (p. 96). Both ethicality and excellence, then, are not an act, but are in part, the result of habit.

Although the notion of habits has been a controversial topic within psychology (see Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006), the emergence of social cognitive theories have gone some way in resolving previous concerns. By examining the formation of habits through, for example, the schema model of self-concept (Markus, 1977), the development of moral character can be broken down into cognitive units (i.e., schemas and prototypes) that emerge from repeated experience, guided instruction, observation, and immersive experience (for a full review see Leary, 2007). Through this process, habits continually evolve through training and competition. As such, participants' understanding of contextual standards of right and wrong and the ability to make moral judgements (i.e., Bandura, 2006; Van Bavel et al., 2015) may be influenced by their involvement in sport.

At a local level, coaches and managers play an important role in shaping the culture and moral climate within clubs and training environments more broadly. Researchers in both developmental and sport psychology have emphasized the important role coaches play in the socialization of young people within sport. Be it through tacit gestures, explicit endorsement, or the modelling of appropriate and inappropriate behavior, coaches are thought to play a key role in developing moral agency and constructing the moral environment to which participants of sport are socialized (Weiss et al., 2008). Given the civic importance of this function, it is unsurprising that researchers interested in sport-focused moral psychology have allocated considerable efforts over the preceding decades to develop our understanding of individual differences in moral processing within sport (for a full review see Boardley, 2020) and how this combines to create a moral atmosphere (Benson et al., 2017; Kavussanu et al., 2002; Shields & Bredemeier, 2007; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996; Benson et al., 2017). Despite these efforts,

however, the role sport plays in the moral development (i.e., learning socially accepted values and behaviors [Bandura, 1977]) of sport participants is often overlooked both in terms of coach education and applied practice.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is two-fold. First, we aim to provide an introduction into the study of moral psychology in sport. Second, we hope to provide practical advice around placing ethicality, excellence (of character and thought), and participant empowerment at the forefront of sport and sports coaching. We do this by introducing the Three E's (i.e., ethicality, excellences, and empowerment) of Values-Based Coaching (VBC). It is hoped that by providing a simple initialism in these three Es, coaches, clubs and sports organizations will be able to easily recall the content discussed here and use this as a basis for reflecting upon their motives, goals, and behaviors.

Given the enormity of this topic, a broad discussion around descriptive, normative, applied, and metaethics will not take place here. Instead, this chapter will focus on introducing factors relating to moral development that fall within normative ethics; specifically, Deontology (Kant, 1796/2002), Consequentialism, and Virtue Ethics (Aristotle, 4th Century B.C.E./1998). These theories provide the requisite conceptual backdrop to the underpinnings of moral philosophy and cover the vast majority of psychological research interested in moral judgement and action. Unlike others who discuss empowerment from the perspective of motivational climate (Appleton & Duda, 2016; Duda & Appleton, 2016; Duda, 2013), here, self-worth and self-efficacy are viewed as the determinant of empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1998) and as such, the antecedent processes of ethicality, and excellences of character and thought are discussed.

It is important to note that there is no one right way to approach moral philosophy and we fully appreciate that the application and importance placed on moral ideologies and foundations differ between sports, coaches, athletes, and teams. The topics presented here are included to provide a guide to aid in the re-evaluation of constructing normatively appropriate standards relevant to specific contexts. With this in mind, VBC is defined by identifying normatively appropriate standards that guide the formation of personal and collective goals and the actuation of subsequent behavior. It is important to note, however, that whilst ideologies and the importance placed on individual values and ethics differ, their inclusion as the foundation to moral systems largely do not (Graham et al., 2013). Through enhancing our understanding of the expected values and ethics of individuals participating in sport and recognizing cultural differences in the rules, expectations, obligations, and outcomes associated with sporting participation, we can begin to develop new approaches to moral education that help redress the ethical issues currently experienced within many sports.

The Three Es of Values-Based Coaching

Ethicality

The question of how we ought to act and make judgements (i.e., normative ethics) has been discussed by philosophers for centuries (e.g., Aristotle, 4th Century B.C.E./1998). The earliest and arguably most influential theories of moral development in psychology (i.e., Piaget, 1932/1965; Kohlberg, 1981, 1984), were heavily influenced by Kant's (1796/2002) deontological ethics. For Kant, the moral status of an act is judged in terms of the rules, duties, or obligations that constrain action (Kagan, 1997). From a Kantian perspective, actions that violate these constraints are viewed as morally prohibited. Within this view, it is implied that responsibility for action is derived based on the freedom of will. In other words, an individual is morally blameworthy if they freely contravene the rules or their duties and obligations to both themselves and others.

In sport, this view of morality may be demonstrated by the blame attached to single or repeat users of prohibited forms of performance enhancing methods or substances. One is often met with a

degree of sympathy, while the other is vilified for knowingly and willingly contravening the rules and foregoing their associated duties and obligations. Laboratory-based studies examining how blame is attributed and the influence blame has on perceived moral character support this notion (Siegel et al., 2017). How blame is attributed, however, may be dependent on the context and ethical position of those applying blame. Unlike deontology, for example, consequentialism makes no distinctions regarding rules, duties, and obligations. Instead, actions are morally justifiable according to whether they yield favorable or unfavorable consequences. Consequentialism is often viewed as a cold and calculating ideology that seeks to maximize good while minimizing harm (Smart & Williams, 1973). However, consequentialism comes in many forms, including, but not limited to: Utilitarianism, Ethical Egoism, and Teleological Ethics. In the interests of brevity, each form of consequentialism will not be outlined here. Instead, see the seminal text by Smart and Williams (1973) for a review of these approaches. Within all forms of consequentialism, however, the intent or will of the person is of little importance as it is the act rather than the individual that is judged. For example, Tamburrini (2000) argues that, from a Utilitarian perspective, Diego Maradona's infamous Hand of God Goal¹ against England in the 1986 World Cup is morally vindicated as it had a positive effect on football and helped diffuse international tensions around the Falklands War. In this example, Tamburrini is primarily focused on judging the outcome of the act by its consequences and not by its adherence to the rules of the game, duties and obligations to fellow players, or by Maradona's character as a person. We also see this approach in high performance sport, more broadly. For example, through the adoption of medal-based funding models, which emphasize winning over athlete welfare (Feddersen et al., 2020). Winning medals (i.e., The Gold-Medal Effect) is seen as good for sport and society (Maennig & Porsche, 2008). For example, researchers have demonstrated economic benefits, improved participation, and a perceived increase to quality of life (Barget & Gouget, 2007; Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010). These benefits, however, are contrasted to the potential abuse of athletes and those involved in the construction of such events (Mountjoy, 2018). For many, the ends may justify the means. For others, they may not.

Both of the views presented thus far have been act/rule-based, rather than based on the person. Within virtue ethics—the third approach to normative ethics discussed here—the primary concern is to do the right thing, at the right time, and for the right reason (Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2011). As a person-based approach, virtue ethicists argue that a person's traits, dispositions, and character should also be factored into consideration when evaluating moral issues (Uhlmann et al., 2015).

Specifically, virtue ethics emphasizes the character of the agent and whether they possess desired virtues. Further, they propose that moral evaluations should focus on local features of an act and agent. For example, whether the action violates a rule, whether the agent's mental state at the time of the action allowed for alternative actions, or whether the act caused harm. As such, virtue ethics is sometimes referred to as the "third way" of normative ethics (Stan Van Hooft, 2014). Although this approach fell out of favor in moral philosophy and psychology during the early twentieth century, in recent times it has seen something of a resurgence (See Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2011).

From a sporting perspective, differences in these philosophical positions can be observed in the way coaches approach athlete development. Within a recent debate in the sports leadership literature, Cruickshank and Collins (2015, 2016, 2017) and Mills and Boardley (2017a, 2017b), highlight differences in philosophical approaches to moral investigation. On one side of the debate, Mills and Boardley (2017a, 2017b) champion a person-centered and virtue ethics-based approach to the study of sports

¹ The Hand of God Goal is how Diego Maradona referred to his first goal in Argentina's Quarter-final victory over England in the 1986 men's FIFA World Cup. It is clear to see from the footage that Maradona handles the ball into the goal with his arm above his head. Argentina would go on to win the match and eventually the World Cup.

leaders. On the other side of the argument, Cruickshank and Collins (2017) advocate an outcome-based and consequentialist approach:

For clarity, we still see that work on the full spectrum of leadership behavior, including that of a socially undesirable nature, plus a consideration of the cognitive drivers of leadership behavior, are essential routes forward if researchers are to make a significant stride in practically meaningful knowledge; in short, what leaders do. On the basis of their calls to explore attitudes, character, morality and value congruence, it seems Mills and Boardley are perhaps more focused on who leaders are. (p. 573)

Although these approaches often lead to the same outcome, the process can be markedly different. For example, in attempting to encourage athletes to achieve high performance outcomes, Cruickshank and Collins (2015, 2016, 2017) advocate the use of manipulative, deceitful, cunning, exploitative, cynical, distrusting, controlling, and domineering coaching behaviors. Such behaviors, however, are incompatible with the virtue ethics position adopted by Mills and Boardley. Fundamentally, the researchers here are viewing the same issue through different lenses. In judging the ethicality of an outcome based on the personal success achieved, Cruickshank and Collins' position would appear to fall within a sub-discipline of consequentialism called ethical egoism. In contrast to other consequentialist approaches to ethics that refer to maximizing the greatest good, ethical egoism suggests that moral agents ought to act in their own self-interest (Smart & Williams, 1973). In this instance, a coach may be abusive towards an athlete in the name of achieving personal goals. Although such coaches may also argue that they adopt such methods for the good of the athlete – by pushing them to achieve – one must question the toll in enduring abuse to those who survive. We must also consider what might have been for many athletes whose performance suffered due to such behavior. Rather than extolling such behavior or accepting them as the norm, we should consider how it may damage the coach-athlete relationship and affect an athlete's wellbeing (Jowett & Cockerill, 2002). Everyone enjoys winning, but for some, how they win is also important. For someone who aligns with this view of ethical egoism, winning through manipulation, abuse, and exploitation to advance one's ego may result in the same level of satisfaction as winning in a virtuous manner. Similarly, for those who primarily follow deontological ethics, the act of exploitation, for example, often breaches moral obligations and expectations. This again limits what can be considered ethical behavior within deontology. Given these differences, those involved in sport should be mindful of their own ethical position and of those they work with.

Moral Excellence

Excellence of Character

Aristotle suggests that there are two different kinds of human excellences: (a) excellence of character, and (b) excellence of thought. Excellences of character are often referred to as the embodiment of moral virtues such as fairness, trustworthiness, and honesty. According to Blasi (2005), however, excellence of character can be defined by three higher order virtues: (a) integrity (i.e., self-consistency), (b) moral desires (i.e., possessing moral goals and ambitions), and (c) willpower (i.e., the ability to resist the temptation to morally disengage or transgress). Although to some these may seem similar to the description of ethicality, this view is framed by your dominant ethical position. Those who favour utility, for example, may differ from deontologists in that they view fairness as equity rather than equality. For Blasi, willpower, integrity and moral desires are less susceptible to such debate. Given their global importance to the self, higher order virtues are positioned as a core aspect of the self-concept. Although lower order virtues, such as honesty and fairness are important, Blasi (2009) argues that they are largely context specific. Lastly, deficiencies of character may reflect egoistic or misguided moral

desires or as a failure of will (i.e., insufficient determination, perseverance, or courage to act consistently with one's ideals; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

Although moral character is viewed as complex and multifaceted (Walker & Hennig, 2004), the core of character is relatively straightforward. When dealing with others, perceptions are created through consistency in words and actions, a belief that the actor holds moral intentions, is able to resist temptation, and can be relied upon (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Similarly, lower order virtues (e.g., compassion and conscientiousness) and emotional responses that indicate empathetic reactions (e.g., care and concern) are viewed as valuable indicators of character (Uhlmann et al., 2015). Further, such responses act as a useful source of social information and permit the perceiver to gauge intent towards prosocial action. That is, whether the individual is worthy of investment and likely to behave in a considerate and cooperative manner. In toxic or abusive cultures, those with power seek to ensure that the athletes are made to feel they have no voice or control (Mountjoy, 2018) making cooperation from the athletes within this environment easier. Based on these evaluations, we may decide that an individual is a 'bad' character if they appear manipulative and untrustworthy (i.e., Machiavellian), self-aggrandizing and acting in their self-interest (i.e., Narcissism), or behaving unfairly to others and lacking empathy (i.e., Psychopathy; Pizarro & Tannenbaum, 2011). Equally, this may extend to perceptions of the individual's intent (i.e., moral desire) and a perceived lack of willpower to resist the temptation to act in a normatively inappropriate manner. The frequency and impact of the action also acts as social information in the evaluation of character (Uhlmann et al., 2015). Deliberate acts that can be explained via multiple motives and are of low impact are thought to possess low informational value. In contrast, automatic decisions that are taken with ease (Critcher et al., 2013) and acts that are harder to explain or have high impact are perceived as character defining (Uhlmann, et al., 2015).

Coaches, therefore, should be mindful of what they practice, how they practice, and why they practice as they do. It should go without saying, but coaches wishing to develop positive and long-lasting relationships with their participants should avoid using manipulative, exploitative, or deceptive means. An example of this is coaches recruiting athletes to college or performance programmes using disingenuous or manipulative tactics when describing the culture. Once the athlete has joined it is very hard for that athlete to then leave a culture that was not accurately described. Honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness should be the norm rather than the exception when coaching (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Coaches who place "me" above "we" are likely to be viewed skeptically by their participants, who may assign negative attributions based on the social information self-aggrandizing conveys (Mills & Boardley, 2019). Ultimately, participants will use this social information to make inferences around the coach's motive and character (Mills & Boardley, 2017b). Those who forego their usual ethical standards in order to seek a competitive advantage may also raise concerns around the coach's character. This, of course, depends on whether a similar win at all costs position is shared by participants (i.e., value congruence), but any drastic deviation from typical intentions and behaviors will likely to be viewed skeptically.

Excellence of Thought

Aristotle proposes excellences of thought to be intellectual virtues such as technical expertise and practical wisdom. Despite nearly 40 years of research, defining technical expertise within the realm of sport coaching has been problematic. Authors have historically used win-loss percentages, athlete attributes, length of time in coaching, and level of competition as approaches to define coaching expertise. Côté and Gilbert (2009) have attempted to integrate these definitions and suggest that the effective implementation of coaching expertise requires "the consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts" (p. 316). Although the mention of character here is welcomed, possessing virtuous qualities is just one aspect of moral development and fails to

consider moral functioning (i.e., moral sensitivity, agency, motivation, and intent) and the alternate philosophical positions available. Should the coach and athlete share similar motivation for moral excellence, they may begin working together to co-construct a moral atmosphere. If not, either the coach, athlete or both may seek to re-align their moral self-concept to find a shared position or one or both may wish to leave the group (Mills & Boardley, 2019).

In terms of practical wisdom, coaches and athletes require a combination of perceptual attunement, complex understanding, motivation for excellence, and the capacity to use this expertise to demonstrate normatively appropriate decision making and behavior (Narvaez & Rest, 1995). Based on Rest's (1986) Four Component Model of Moral Functioning, coaches and athletes should be sensitive to environmental cues and consider the impact of any potential action on the welfare of others. Sometimes interpreting the situation permits a deliberate and considered response (e.g., the decision to engage in or report prohibited forms of performance enhancement), however, other times require a snap judgement (e.g., purposefully initiating contact with an opponent to solicit a foul). In these examples, the athlete is seeking to gain an ill gotten advantage, which may or may not fall outside of the social norms for their specific sport. Although some sports may be more permissive of such transgressions than others, Rest (1986) argues that the moral agent should consider whether the course of action is socially responsible, equitable, and how one ought to act.

As you may recall from the ethicality section earlier, such decisions are largely Kantian and may differ depending on the philosophical position one adopts. Kant (1796/2002) argues that the agent must consider the universalizability of their transgression. Using the doping example again, would the coach or athlete who is encouraging or considering using prohibited forms of performance enhancement wish to see everyone using such substances in sport? From a purely functional perspective (see Petróczi, 2013) the athlete may argue that they are purely motivated to use such substances to push the boundaries of their capabilities and would accept all others doing the same. However, those from a moral perspective may argue that, for example, such an approach would create an environment where free will and moral agency is limited with everyone feeling required to take potentially harmful substances in order to compete. According to Kant, an action is deemed morally acceptable if it can be universalized. That is, everyone could do it. In this case, it is difficult to see how either deontologists, virtue ethicists, or consequentialists (excluding ethical egoism) could argue in favour of the latter. Once the situation is assessed and a judgement around the moral course of action formed, one must then weigh up whether they are motivated to act. Before doing so, however, they must also consider whether competing interests are more dominant and whether the action is likely to garner either an intrinsic or extrinsic emotional response (Narvaez & Rest, 1995). On one hand they may be drawn by the perceived rewards and on the other anticipated guilt, shame, or fear of social reprisal as a result of pyrrhic action. The coach and athlete must then draw on their resoluteness and persevere to turn these intentions into actions. Should one or more of these processes fail, it is likely that a moral failure will occur (Narvaez & Rest, 1995).

Empowerment

Conger and Kanungo (1987) define empowerment as the process of raising others' self-efficacy perceptions. However, Spreitzer (1995) has since broadened this definition to include collective efficacy and self-esteem. Self-efficacy is the individual's belief in his or her ability to successfully perform tasks (Bandura, 1986). Further, collective efficacy is similar to self-efficacy and is defined as a belief that a team or group can function effectively and perform its tasks successfully (Bandura, 1986). Coaches who encourage personal identification (i.e., with the coach) are thought to advocate dependency (Kark et al., 2003). As such, collective efficacy may be more prominent within empowering rather than dependent environments. Finally, self-esteem has been defined as the extent to which an individual takes a positive view of their self (Gergen, 1971). The concept of self-esteem has been well examined within sport and

exercise contexts, both in terms of a predictor of mental health (e.g., Standage & Simpkins, 2007) and an outcome of sporting participation (e.g., Slutzky & Simpkins, 2009). Because of its significance for mental health, wellbeing, and quality of life, self-esteem enhancement should be a priority for sports coaches of all levels, but particularly those working within grassroots sport (Fox, 1997). In more recent times, high profile cases of athlete welfare issues including Alberto Salazar (suspended from coaching pending appeal) and Larry Nassar (incarcerated for wide scale abuse of athletes) suggest performance coaches in future may also view self-esteem enhancement with greater importance.

An empowered athlete believes in his or her ability to perform successfully and understands their self-worth (Conger & Kanungo, 1987). Therefore, coaches can have an empowering effect on those they work with in terms of raising their self-efficacy beliefs by delegating responsibility, enhancing a capacity to solve intellectually challenging problems, and through encouraging the generation of new and creative ideas (Dvir et al., 2002). Further, athletes high in global self-esteem view themselves as important, influential, effective, and worthwhile (Rosenberg, 1965). Coaches can nurture athlete self-esteem by setting and supporting athletes to achieve high expectations, expressing belief in their abilities, setting intellectually stimulating challenges, and by demonstrating how activities help support the group's collective goals and values (Shamir et al., 1993). Should one attempt to seize power back from supposedly empowered individuals (see Cruickshank, & Collins, 2015, 2016), this would undoubtedly undermine the process. Further, by seizing control from their athletes, coaches risk developing deference and ultimately dependency in the group. Both of which are thought to stifle any empowering effect that may have previously been experienced (Kark et al., 2003).

If not managed carefully, however, feelings of empowerment may develop into self-righteousness (i.e., holding the view that one is morally superior; Haidt, 2012). To temper this, those involved in sport should be encouraged to show humility and resist temptation (i.e., self-regulatory efficacy) to gloat about their perceived self-worth and capability. Self-regulatory efficacy is a facet of global self-efficacy and beyond tempering ego, performs an important function in governing transgressive behavior. For example, individuals high in self-regulatory efficacy have consistently been shown to resist personal and social pressures to engage in detrimental conduct (Bandura et al., 2001). Within sport, this has primarily been examined in terms of doping (Boardley et al., 2017), cheating (d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 2010), and aggression (Corrion et al., 2009). Although perceived self-efficacy serves a regulatory function in all developmental periods, adolescence is a key phase of enquiry (d'Arripe-Longueville et al., 2010). As a period often associated with exploratory engagement in high-risk activities (e.g., substance abuse, unprotected sex, and transgressive conduct in various domains, including sports), providing an appropriate and supportive example during this time may be of critical importance to athlete moral development.

Practical Advice for Coaches

Within the coach-athlete relationship, consistency between words and actions is key. From the perspective of moral excellence and to be viewed as possessing integrity, this consistency in words and actions should reflect trust in athletes, fairness, and empathetic concern. For those responsible for recruiting coaches within the junior sport and for the coaches occupying such roles, the aforementioned qualities should be placed above all else. Anecdotally it appears that recruiters are most concerned with understanding what a coach has won and what experiences they have from previous employment when hiring. Although the ability to develop technical and tactical competency is of course a key outcome of coaching. Focus on how they have developed their athletes beyond the track/field/water may provide more useful insight. However, identifying an individual's ability to nurture the development of moral functioning, that is, supporting athletes to interpret normatively appropriate standards of what is right and wrong, make moral judgements, prioritize moral motivations, and take responsibility for their

actions, is arguably of equal if not greater importance than their ability to enhance technical and tactical skill. The coach has an important role to play in this process as their words and actions align with those of important others within an athlete's moral schema—potentially creating a heuristic for appropriate behavior within set contexts.

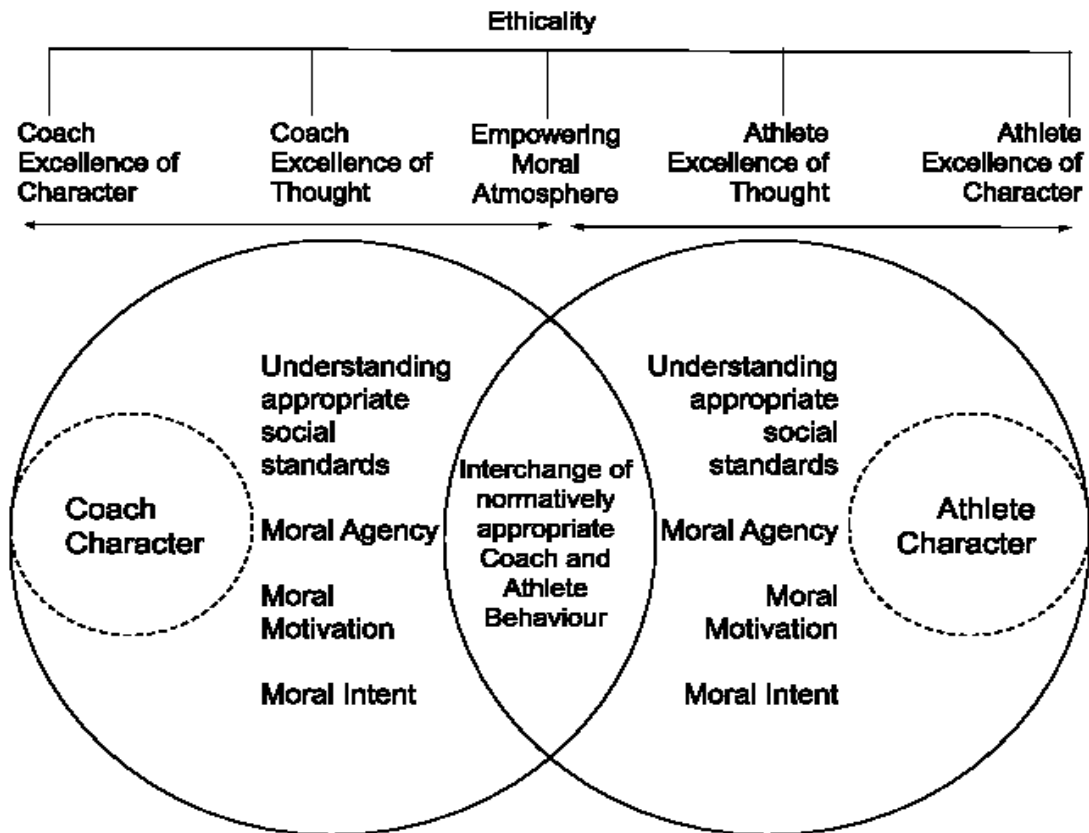


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Developing the Three Es

In this section, consideration is given to how the moral atmosphere within sport may be co-constructed and habituated (see Figure 24.1). Although these processes are relevant to all in sport, in the following section a particular focus is paid to coaches and athletes, as they, to the general public at least, are the main actors and outward face of sport. Further, within the early years, coaches are thought to be particularly prominent in shaping the moral education of their players through sport (Weiss et al., 2008). During an athlete's formative years, the coach plays a key role in setting appropriate standards and establishing an ethical culture. Although the directionality of these processes may be more one-way (i.e., an apprenticeship model) in the early years, as athletes become more aware of themselves as moral agents, progressing towards co-construction of moral standards and a moral environment is key.

Figure 24.1
Interactive Processes Leading to Coach-Athlete Moral Development and Atmosphere



Supporting Individuals

As Steutel and Spiecker (2004) suggest, the habituation of moral agency and function is best understood by role modelling normatively appropriate behavior. Alas, this is not particularly a new or novel concept. Social Learning Theory is arguably one of the most well-known and influential theories in psychology (Bandura, 1986). Through consistent and regular practice and under the guidance of an ethical and empowering coach, normative standards can be produced and normalized within the moral atmosphere. Habits are then internalized leading to adaptations in the individual’s character that occur and can be recalled spontaneously without reflective deliberation (Steutel & Spiecker, 2004). By practicing normatively appropriate standards, individuals acquire the skills associated with said standards. From a virtue ethics perspective, which is arguably the most intuitive of the ideologies for moral education (Haidt, 2012), this may be the development of characteristics such as fair play, integrity, and consciousness. Similarly, from a deontological position this may result in a greater understanding and respect for rules, expectations, and obligations. Lastly, those who align with a consequentialist position may learn to maximize good for all, the group (i.e., collective consequentialism) or the self (i.e., ethical egoism). Although these positions use different means and are presented independently here for the sake of clarity, they are not mutually exclusive and are often intertwined in application. It is also important to note that other factors such as: the individual’s personality, background, the socio-economic environment they are exposed to, existing affiliations, and whether they derive value from achievement or social perception are also likely to influence the habit

formation process. As such, understanding the uniqueness of individual athletes is important. The challenge of coaching is to identify commonalities between individuals within one's team and to tailor their environment accordingly. However, such a challenge is not specific to developing the Three Es and is arguably a cornerstone of effective leadership (Barling, 2014; Bass, 1999) and Coaching (Turnnidge & Côté, 2019) more broadly.

Within this complex set of social influences, the development of excellence and normatively appropriate standards of moral agency and function is a matter of perfecting interactive skills in perception, sensitivity, reasoning and judgment, focus, and action. To acquire a virtue is to fine-tune your perceptual abilities such that you detect the relevant signals, then feel the right emotions, understand their meaning, and then act in the right way (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). For example, to show kindness is to demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of others, to feel compassion when warranted, and to offer your full-hearted support. Likewise, to be courageous, is to be able to detect very different kinds of threats and opportunities, and to respond in a very different sort of way (Haidt, 2012).

As coaches and experts in skill acquisition more broadly are aware, the practice of a skill leads to increased automaticity of response (Bargh et al., 1988). Through practice and competition, athletes develop intuitive responses that facilitate automatic judgements and behavioral responses (Narvaez, 2010). Although in sport, this is primarily discussed in terms of technical skill development and tactical decision making, the process is the same for moral development. That is, through frequent activation, moral processing around ethical dilemmas may become incorporated within social cognitive schemas to the point of chronic automaticity (Lapsley & Hill, 2008). In other words, athletes develop automatic ways of responding to ethically challenging situations within sport through repeated exposure; much in the same way as they automatically perform a complex skill. Coaches, then, can support moral development through frequent and consistent use of positive reinforcement, modelling appropriate behaviors, and consistently enforcing normative ethical standards (Bargh et al., 1988; Smith et al., 1977).

Groups

The focus thus far has been on individuals, however, how one assimilates successfully into the group's culture is of equal importance. It is almost universally the case that the hiring process seeks a fit between the person and the organization, broadly defined as "the congruence of an individual's beliefs and values with the culture, norms, and values of an organization" (Koleva et al., 2017, p. 526). Research conducted within the leadership domain suggests that value congruence may have a mediating effect on the relationship between perceptions of the leader's values and follower outcomes (Brown & Treviño, 2006). More specifically, should the group perceptions of the leader's value match their desired values, positive follower outcomes are likely to be demonstrated. In contrast, should the perceived values of the leader deviate from those desired by the group, negative outcomes and a potentially toxic environment are likely to follow (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Jung & Avolio, 2000). Similarly, Bretz and Judge (1994) and Caldwell and O'Reilly (1990) have demonstrated a strong relationship between person-organization fit, and numerous measures of employee satisfaction and job performance. Where there is congruence between individual and group values, a moral atmosphere is likely to follow (Motyl et al., 2014).

In order to maximize the benefits of moral fit, athletes need to not only uphold shared values, but rather live them (Koleva et al., 2017). From an external perspective, it would appear that many sports governing bodies and clubs have attempted to distil the core values they wish to espouse (e.g., creating a philosophy document). However, this is often superficial and fails to be developed into a moral system that is implemented and embedded within their respective cultures. Without thoroughly seeking to understand the existing culture, such an approach merely attempts to transpose values onto others. Further, it does not create a system that embeds the development of such values within the community. At an organizational level, endorsing honesty, for example, is easy. However, fostering an

environment where athletes feel safe to freely speak their minds without fear of retribution is less so – but it can be done. For example, facilitating a system to garner anonymous feedback is one mechanism. Encouraging a culture where all voices are heard and valued is harder, but again, processes can be put in place to create a more open environment (e.g., by soliciting feedback from subversive athletes, challenging domineering behavior, or encouraging small group projects). The first step for those involved in sport is, therefore, to reflect on personal standards both individually, as a group, and broader community. From there, individuals may work together to highlight desired moral virtues and co-construct cultural norms based upon moral foundations. Through this co-construction of normatively appropriate standards, those involved in sport can begin to find ways to incorporate moral skill development within their practice, and ultimately, within the self-concept. However, failing to achieve any one of these steps will likely result in a lack of moral internalization.



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Environment

Beyond individuals and groups, structural modifications can be made to the competitive environment to enhance moral development. Most commonly referred to as competitive engineering (Burton et al., 2011a), this approach advocates the modification of facilities, equipment, and rules to enhance participant motivation (Burton et al., 2011b; McCalpin et al., 2017). Examples include: (a) permitting participants to select their own level of competition (e.g., playing up or down age-grades), (b) modifying facilities (e.g., playing on smaller or larger fields, courts etc.), (c) adjusting equipment (e.g., using smaller or larger equipment, balls that run faster or slower, or bounce higher or lower), and (d) altering the rules (e.g., every player plays at least half a game; Jones et al., 2021). Whilst competitive engineering has primarily been examined from a motivational perspective, there is no reason why similar structural changes cannot be used to enhance moral development. For example, ending a game and allowing participants to mix teams should one team establish an insurmountable lead (as many of us did on the playground as children), offering bonus points for pro-social action (e.g., helping up an opponent should they fall, being honest and showing respect to everyone involved in the competition,

showing good manners), or removing officials entirely and encouraging the participants to self-police their competition.

Whilst a relatively young area of academic enquiry, Competitive Engineering has demonstrated promise in enhancing the types of positive outcomes that can be obtained through sport. Specifically, within engineered sporting environments, participants have reported increased engagement (Harwood et al., 2018), technical skill acquisition (Morley, 2016), enjoyment, and time on ball (Thomas & Wilson, 2016). However, competitive engineering goes beyond motivational and skill acquisition outcomes. Similar outcomes can be initiated within the domain of moral development. Sports administrators should consider whether the approach they currently adopt is providing younger sports participants with a structure that enhances moral development and encourages healthy competitive opportunities over winning (Côté & Hancock, 2016). At the performance level, how success is defined needs to go beyond the medal table (Bishop, 2020) with attention spent on developing the athletes beyond their sport so, at the very least, they are able to assimilate into society in a post-athlete career with minimal issues (Wylleman et al., 2004).

Conclusion

Coaching is a privilege that carries great responsibility; none more so than supporting the moral development of the people we work with. The greatest lesson a coach can teach is what it means to strive for moral excellence in an ethically appropriate and empowering manner. The aim of this chapter was, therefore, to introduce moral philosophy within sport and to outline an approach to coaching that places the development of the Three Es at the forefront of coaching practice and research. More than that, it is a plea for those involved in sport to reflect upon what they believe are the most important elements of their role. Historically, for example, coaches have spent the majority of their time seeking ways to develop technical skills. Although important, such skills mean little without appropriate moral development and socialization. Further, at youth levels, developing moral agents who understand normatively appropriate social standards and are motivated to behave in a moral manner should be of equal, if not greater, importance to technical and tactical skill acquisition. That said, it is not a competition and just like personal, inter-personal, and intra-personal skills, one process can be mastered alongside the other (Evans et al., 2015; Lefebvre et al., 2016)

Despite frequent admission of the importance of using sport as a vehicle for moral education, to date, these endeavors have lacked clear conceptualization and direction. Through presenting both an argument for the importance of developing normatively appropriate ethical standards in sport and an explanation as to how such standards are cognitively incorporated within the self-concept, it is hoped that this chapter goes some way in addressing these concerns. To further aid in this process a series of considerations are presented below. Most importantly, a framework outlining the development of normatively appropriate ethical standards is also discussed with a clear progression towards a system of co-construction to meet the changing needs and capabilities of the athlete.

Within this approach, the moral agency of the reader is considered. Although normative approaches to ethics are highlighted and character development advocated, specific standards are not prescribed. Instead, it is left up to the reader to reflect upon their own beliefs and consider how they may incorporate the concepts discussed here within their own practice. Presented are a series of tips below to aid this process:

- Consider your ethical position. Reflect upon decisions you have made and the motives for doing so. Openly discuss your ethical position and expectations for others. Work with your athletes to co-construct normative moral standards. Identify shared values, consider the group's habits, and where appropriate, adjust.

- Continually strive for excellence. Contemplate whether you are of integrity (i.e., consistent in your words and actions), have moral desires, and are able to resist the temptation to win by lowering your personal standards. Consider your lower order virtues and speak to others to gauge how the social information you present is being perceived. Reflect upon whether there is a discrepancy between how you think and act when stressed, tired, and/or under pressure compared to when you are not. If you make poor choices or behave in a way that you do not like under such conditions, try to limit their influence. Examine ways to develop your contextual understanding and explore opportunities to embed different forms of learning opportunities within your practice.
- Empower your athletes. Share power and responsibility with your athlete[s], set intellectually challenging problems to solve, and show support and encouragement for new and creative ideas. Nurture athlete self- and collective esteem by setting and supporting athletes to achieve high expectations, expressing belief in their abilities, and by demonstrating how activities help support the group's collective goals and values. Consider the level of value congruence within your club or organization. Implement mechanisms that support the development of a moral and empowering culture (e.g., challenging behavior that does not fit within the organization's aims).

Learning Exercises

1. What ethical position do you take within your coaching practice?
2. How do you embed moral development in your practice?
3. How do you develop the moral climate within your group or team?
4. What impact do the athletes you coach have on your morals?
5. How do you evaluate whether you are meeting the moral standards you set for yourself as a coach?
6. How are you able to modify your equipment in your environment to support moral development of the athletes?

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