



Topic Area 5: ETHICS AND ETHICAL DECISION MAKING IN SPORT



LESSON PLAN/GUIDE



Australian Government
Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority



Australian Government
National Integrity of Sport Unit



Unit 1: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS IN SPORT

Level: Adaptable for Years 9 through 12.

Subjects: The following Unit aligns to key knowledge statements in:

- Some senior Physical Education curriculum (theory of moral development).
- Some senior Religion and Society curriculum (ethical method in a pluralistic society).

Teacher Notes

The Lesson Plan/Guide for this Topic, and others in this Topic series, provides background information, resources and ideas to assist teachers in developing a lesson (or series of lessons), which addresses the key concepts articulated in relevant areas of the curriculum.



Teachers should introduce the two Units within this Topic by providing an introduction using the **lesson overview** below and highlight the **learning objectives** to be achieved. The teacher should then introduce some of the **key questions** that will be investigated and choose some of the activities (and relevant resources) to examine and explore these further. The **extended learning activity** can be used as a homework or take-away activity and **further resources** can be provided for students who wish to delve deeper into the topic. Learning time for each Unit will be determined by how many activities the teacher wishes to analyse and discuss.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Athletes, coaches and administrators live in a complex world where decisions and choices are made every day about health, training, competition and how they can be the best in their chosen sport. The lure of 'quick fixes', a 'boost' or 'shortcuts' to excellence, more money and rewards or greater performance remain a constant temptation for some. It is a world where performance, values, principles and purpose collide and where making ethical decisions are not always straightforward.



Ethics is essentially a system of moral behaviour that ensures a level of integrity or good character is maintained - it helps us see and differentiate right from wrong and good from bad in sport. For example, we know that a person that handballs a goal in football, and tries to get away with it, is breaking the rules. They break the ethical code of football by being dishonest and cheating. Their integrity is bought into question through their actions. In this sense 'ethics' are the overarching systems and concepts that dictate integrity.

In this Unit, students will discover how ethics guides the behaviours and choices we make every day and incorporates rules, principles, values and purpose. Students will work forward from thinking about what they believe about sport, it's meaning and it's purpose, to what they think matters in terms of their own values, principles and ethical beliefs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Consider what the meaning or purpose of sport is to different individuals.
- Recognise different concepts in sport such as sportsmanship, fairness and the spirit of sport.
- Recognise the difference between winning and succeeding in sport.
- Understand the different ethical frameworks that help to guide people's decisions.
- Recognise what it means to be ethical.
- Identify the values and principles that are most commonly associated with sport.



KEY QUESTIONS

1. How do you define fairness in sport?
2. What is the difference between gamesmanship and sportsmanship?
3. How does WADA define the spirit of sport? What does it mean to compete in the 'spirit of sport'?
4. What is your definition of success in sport? How do you define failure?
5. Name the key ethical standards or theories and how they each influence decision making?
6. What are ethics and morals?¹
7. What is the difference between a value and a principle?²
8. What are some examples of 'values'? And which values are commonly associated with sport?
9. What are some examples of 'principles'? And which principles are commonly associated with sport?
10. What role can values and principles play in protecting the integrity of sport?



ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

1. In reference to his famous statement: "Winning isn't everything, but it's the only thing". Famous coach Vince Lombardi said:

*"I wish I'd never said the thing. I meant the effort. I meant having a goal. I sure didn't mean for people to crush human values and morality. Winning is wonderful, but sportsmanship is the lesson to retain for life."*³

 - a. Discuss this statement and the 'win at all costs' ethos that has enveloped sport.
2. Facilitate a discussion on the '*purpose or meaning of sport*' and then brainstorm as a class or in groups the most common examples (fun, to win, social connections, better health, test yourself etc).
 - a. Ask students to list what their main motivations are for being involved in sport. Does this change for individuals over time or in different situations?
 - b. Optional: view the video exploring the junior to elite journey of four USA baseballers.⁴
3. Read the article '*A Framework for thinking ethically*'⁵ and define what ethics is and is not and discover some of the different ethical theories and standards.



4. Read the following quote from Australian Olympic rower Kim Crow and discuss in a group the point she is trying to make and why this is so important in the context of modern sport.

“Dreaming of winning – whether it be at an Olympics, on grand final day or on the local sports ground – is not the problem. Dreams give us the ‘why’ and get us out of bed in the morning. It is those dreams that keep us going when our bodies say ‘stop’. Sport would be meaningless if neither team cared whether they won or lost. The tension of competitors vying to be the best is what makes sport exciting and meaningful. Trying to win and training to win is vitally important. But aspiring to win is vastly different from winning at all costs.”⁶

5. As a class, list 10 values which are commonly associated with sport (courage, persistence, sportsmanship etc). As individuals, select five most important values as determined by each student. Form groups to discuss and agree on the five most important for each group. What challenges do individuals face in adopting group/team values? Review the Australian Olympic team’s values⁷ – what impact (positive/negative) can the individual have on team cohesion and success?
6. As a class or in groups list the principles commonly associated with sport (you must always give 100%, accept the umpire’s decision, play hard but fair etc.). Ask students to list, in order of priority, the two most important principles to them.
7. Research the mission and values of the sporting organisation or club that you belong to. Consider, do these values correspond to your personal values?

Extended Learning Activity: WALKING THE TALK



Think about your own values, principles and morals. These are the things that matter the most to you and inspire you or they get under your skin in a way that makes you feel the urge to act. Consider and answer the following:

- When did they become important to you?
- Where did you learn them?
- Are they yours or someone else’s?
- Have they evolved over time?
- Have they been tested under pressure?
- Do they match up with how other people describe you and your behaviour?
- Do they represent how you live today?

FURTHER RESOURCES



- [The Ethics Centre](#) for article and interviews on sports ethics.⁸
- [Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport](#)⁹
- [Play the Game](#) – an international conference and communication initiative aiming to strengthen the ethical foundation of sport.¹⁰
- [What role does ethics play in sport?](#)¹¹
- J Boxhill (2003). *Sport Ethics: An Anthology*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- [UNESCO Code of Sports Ethics](#)¹²
- [TrueSport](#) – Ethics and values build true sport.¹³



Unit 2: USING AN ETHICAL DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

Level: Adaptable for Years 9 through 12.

Subjects: The following Unit aligns to key knowledge statements in:

- Some senior Physical Education curriculum (theory of moral development).
- Some senior Religion and Society curriculum (ethical method in a pluralistic society).

LESSON OVERVIEW

Ethical dilemmas arise when you have to choose between two things you believe are right and good, or where you need to make a choice between two things you don't prefer at all (because there is no better option available). The classic ethical dilemmas involve choosing between truth and loyalty, individuals and community, short and long-term outcomes or between justice and mercy.



Ethical decision making is a process that involves building awareness of 'ethical content' such as values, principles and beliefs about your defining purpose and an understanding of your own morals. It is also something that involves reflection, self-management, judgment and action. Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and having a practiced method for working through your choices.

This Unit aims to build students' ethical strength and muscles, so they not only become literate about ethics in terms of understanding the logic, reasoning and psychology behind the choices we make on various matters, but also understand how to arrive at ethical decisions, and then practice voicing and enacting those choices in their sport (and lives).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the process of ethical decision making.
- Evaluate why ethical decision making is important to the integrity of sport.
- Understand some reasons and rationalisations that make a person choose to act contrary to their values and principles.
- Explore the components of an ethical decision making framework.
- Apply an ethical decision making framework to a scenario to determine a course of action and identify potential ramifications of the decision.



KEY QUESTIONS



1. Why are some decisions harder to make than others?
2. When faced with an ethical dilemma, what considerations might come into your decision making process?
3. Are there any situations where the rules should be ignored?
4. What is meant by the term 'slippery slope traps' and name some examples of excuses or rationalisations we can make.¹⁴
5. What is meant by the term 'ethical blindness'?¹⁵
6. In what situations might an individual chose to act against their personal values and principles?
7. What are the key components of an ethical decision making framework?
8. Why is having a framework or method to use when making decisions important?
9. Who would your sounding board or trusted ally's be to help you test your decision?
10. What is meant by the term 'sunlight test'?¹⁶

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES



1. Use the 'Making an Ethical Decision' App¹⁷ to take you through a step-by-step decision-making process that allows you to consider your options using five different ethical approaches or standards.
2. Provide the following scenarios on the board/screen:
 - a. You are given (a yet to be released) illegally downloaded episodes of '*Game of Thrones*' (or another popular TV show). You are a mad fan of the show . . .
 - b. The ATM spits out an extra \$50. The receipt indicates it is by error. The bank is next door and open.
 - c. Your classmate and good friend is sending inappropriate messages to you and others that include jokes with racial overtones . . .

Ask students to individually decide which choice is the easiest and which is the hardest. When all students are ready, ask for volunteers to talk through their decision, concentrating on *why* they made their decision. What made each scenario easier or harder to make a decision about? Facilitate discussion amongst the class looking to draw out those comments that relate to values and principles in their decision making. Define '*principles*' and differentiate this definition to what is meant by '*values*'.¹⁸

3. Read out the following dilemma to students:

You find out by accident that a good friend who is in your team has been taking performance enhancing drugs. You know he has had a tough time lately, and you know he is a really great person who works hard and contributes well to your team. He has always been supportive to you and others in your career. However, there is a major event around the corner and you know that if he gets caught, the consequences may be serious for the whole team.

You have a choice to report your friend, help him or remain silent. Do you:

A: Tell your coach/the club or authorities.

B: Speak to your friend and convince him to stop.

C: Remain silent.

Ask students to think about the dilemma and choose an option A, B or C. Then ask various students for their reasoning for each choice?

Now suggest to students that they've heard other reasons why people made their choice, and ask did that change anyone's choice? If so, why?¹⁹

4. Use the following ethical decision making framework to explore sport related dilemmas?^{20,21,22,23}

Students should work through the questions in the framework to help determine what course of action they might take in these various dilemma situations.

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK



- What is the dilemma?
- What are the facts?
- How do you frame it within the rules?
- What is at stake for whom?
- What are your most important values and principles at stake?
- Which of your own assumptions or biases come into play?
- Any potential slippery slope traps?²⁴
- What are your options?
- What is your decision?
- Who can you check your decision with?
- How does your decision match your meaning/purpose of sport?

Facilitation notes: Ethical dilemmas can be presented and facilitated in a number of different ways according to the size, nature, and experience of the group. This facilitation method should be decided by the teacher, however a number of suggestions are made below. In each case, students can be provided with a copy of the Ethical Decision Making Framework to assist their considerations, and ideally will have already identified a number of their key values, principles and their '*meaning of sport*' in previous activities to help them through the decision process.

Option 1: Each student picks (or is given) a scenario and then individually works through the decision making process, noting their key thoughts or issues, before presenting back to the class.

Option 2: Students are divided into groups and work through the scenarios together before presenting back to the class.

Option 3: Discuss a selection of scenarios as a group (or using a selected panel of students). Facilitate the involvement of all students by asking for their input at various stages of the discussion (using the Ethical Decision Making Framework as a guide). What values are involved here? What are the key principles? What is at stake for whom? What might be the consequences of these decisions?



Extended Learning Activity: CREATE YOUR OWN DILEMMA



Students are asked to write their own ethical dilemma relating to sport which can be used by the class to discuss and solve.

The dilemma can be real or imagined, and should include;

- The facts of the case.
- A description of the dilemma.
- A summary of the values and principles involved in the dilemma/decision making.
- A summary of the individual decision the student would make, as well as a rationale referencing their values and principles as to why they would make that choice.

FURTHER RESOURCES



- Grange, P. (2014). *Ethical Leadership in Sport: What's your ENDGame?* Business Expert Press.
- [ASC Clearinghouse: Ethical Sponsorship and Illegal Sports Betting](#)²⁵
- [ASC Clearinghouse: Integrity and ethics in sport](#)²⁶

Endnotes

- 1 <http://theconversation.com/you-say-morals-i-say-ethics-whats-the-difference-30913>
- 2 www.ask.com/world-view/difference-between-values-principles-b74279a14a5990c4
- 3 www.ruderfinn.com/blogs/ethics/2013/04/winning-is-not-everything.html
- 4 <https://vimeo.com/41808348>
- 5 www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/a-framework-for-ethical-decision-making/
- 6 www.smh.com.au/sport/the-spirit-of-sport-20131207-2yydp.html#ixzz3g1H6TzID
- 7 <http://corporate.olympics.com.au/athlete-hub/a-s-p-i-r-e-values>
- 8 www.ethics.org.au/home
- 9 <http://cces.ca>
- 10 www.playthegame.org
- 11 www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/more/resources/what-role-does-ethics-play-in-sports/
- 12 http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2223&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
- 13 <http://truesport.org/resources/publications/reports/ethics-and-values-build-true-sport/>
- 14 www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/slipperyslope.shtml
- 15 <https://hbr.org/2011/04/ethical-breakdowns>
- 16 www.ethics.org.au/about/what-is-ethics
- 17 <https://legacy.scu.edu/ethics/ethical-decision/>
- 18 www.ask.com/world-view/difference-between-values-principles-b74279a14a5990c4
- 19 This activity uses the Konstanz method for Dilemma discussion by German philosopher George Lind.
- 20 www.washingtonpost.com/news/early-lead/wp/2016/01/06/good-sport-jack-sock-tells-lleyton-hewitt-to-challenge-call-loses-point/
- 21 www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/weightlifter-denies-demanding-5000/story-e6frg7mf-1226394488143
- 22 www.icc-cricket.com/cricket-world-cup/greatest-100-moments/122/gilchrist-walks-in-03
- 23 www.theage.com.au/afl/afl-news/afl-players-rally-around-call-to-start-dobbing-in-drug-cheats-20130214-2eg08.html
- 24 www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/slipperyslope.shtml
- 25 www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/knowledge_base/organised_sport/sport_integrity/match-fixing_and_illegal_sports_betting
- 26 www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/knowledge_base/organised_sport/sport_integrity/Integrity_in_Sport