Doping and Diving Aren’t Two Sides of the Same Coin

The Need for a New Compartimentalization in the Public Debate on Sports Cheating

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Play the Game

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What is... "CHEATING IN SPORTS"?

Quickly: let’s ask a certain topical DOPING athlete...
Lance’s Dictionary Definition:

• "I went in and just looked up the definition of “cheat”...”to gain an advantage on a rival or foe that they don't have”...I didn't view it that way. I viewed it as a level playing field."
Bjarne Riis (2012): “’A thief thinks every man steals,’ as the Danish proverb goes. That pretty much summed up how I felt.”
Travis Tygart’s "Counterdefinition"

• “You can go to any kindergarten in this country or around the world and ask kids playing tag or four-square what cheating is. And everyone of them will tell you it’s breaking the rules of the game.”

• (= universal definition -> how about the world game?)
If mere rule-breaking constitutes cheating?
Parameters of Sports Cheating

• 1. Breaking the Rules of the Game (Tygart)
• 2. Unfair Advantage vis-à-vis Competitors (Armstrong)

• 3. Deceptiveness
“Diving” = Cheating
Play-Acting = Cheating [World Cup 2002]
Thierry Henry 2010: (Unconfessed) Handball
PLEASED TO CHEAT YOU
Diving, Unconfessed Handballs etc...

• Calling acts "cheating" is legitimate per se

• Deception towards the referee!
But: the Big Caveat

• So: whenever a player doesn't come clean about his rule-breaking -> cheating?

• Compare: 19th century British gentleman ideal:
  – No referees, control based on players’ honour, dignity
  – still valid in grass-roots games!
= Breaking **Fair Play** Norms or Gentleman’s Agreement

• *Referees are in place precisely because “self-control” unrealistic in top sports!*

• Coming clean still possible; *expecting* it naive and impracticable
Referee-controlled (top) sports: ”License to be a Lion” (= to ”cheat” the referee)
Why **Doping** is Entirely Different

• Special variation of rules, controlled by a special entity (not referees!)

• Legitimate reason for retroactive result-changing and title-stripping
  
  – Principle: results can’t be retroactively changed due to referee mistakes (resulting from unfair play or not)
  
  • Retroactive punishing of *individual* players of course possible!

• **CROWN JEWEL OF SPORTS CHEATING!**
THE PROBLEM:
MYTH OF "ONE"
SPORTS CHEATING:
CONFUSING
DOPING WITH
"UNFAIR PLAY"
RUN, SWIM, THROW, CHEAT
The science behind drugs in sport

Chris Cooper
Whatever concerns we may have for the health of athletes the most common argument against doping remains that it is cheating. Yet why does doping have such disproportionate penalties, compared to other forms of cheating in sport? In football, diving in the penalty area when you have not been fouled can win you a penalty. Many players have admitted to trying to do this. If they are unlucky and get caught then they are given a yellow card. If they accumulate five yellow cards they
Cooper (2012): ”Blatant Cheating” & comparison to doping (enforcement).

On how it views the crime. At the 2010 football World Cup in Africa the Uruguayan player Luis Suarez illegally handled the ball to save a goal. This blatant piece of cheating prevented Ghana being the first African team to reach a World Cup semi final, making Suarez a villain in most of the world (apart from Uruguay of course). He broke the rules, was punished, and then society was able to make its opinion. The situation has clarity. However, this contrasts with another famous handball in the same World Cup year. The French star, Thierry Henry, handled the ball twice in the build up to a key French goal that knocked Ireland out of the cup. Though the offence was acknowledged by Henry, the
Møller & Dimeo (2013): ”Anti-Doping-End of Sport”

• "If the referee mistakes a dive for a penalty or if the drug test of a doped athlete is negative, so be it."
Merely an Academics’ Problem?

• Would be uninteresting if it were... but:
  • Absolutely not!
Cheater Maradona? [World Cup 1994]
"Cheater" Maradona! [World Cup 1986]
David Cameron calls on FA to take hard line with Luis Suárez over bite

- Downing Street calls for example to be made of striker
- Striker condemned for biting Chelsea's Branislav Ivanovic

Andy Hunter
The Guardian, Monday 22 April 2013 18.00 BST
Why does this matter?
Back to the **athlete** perspective

- There are no cheaters without internal **justifications** for their actions: let’s not help in the creation process!
- Danger of doping ending up blurred with the far lesser forms of “cheating”!
How to Fix things?
”New Compartmentalization”? 

• Should we invent new words? Rather, let’s mainstream an analogy:
  
• 1. Unwritten rules in normal society: manners
• 2. Written special(!) rules: (criminal) law

= comparing doping and breaking fair play norms -> like comparing crime with bad manners!
Conclusions: Stop the Hypocrisy

• If premises are this false...no hope for sensible debate/development
• Of course strengthening the dichotomy is no magic bullet (for doping)!
• Still: *never equate doping* (or e.g. match-fixing) with breaking *fair play* norms – and make sure no-one else does either!
LET LIONS BE LIONS...AND LET'S CATCH THE REAL CHEATS
Thank You

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If time:
• Only chance to "get away" with doping (as with crime): if the authorities don’t find about the act
  – But: if you break fair play norms, no retroactive consequences!
• "To take drugs is to cheat. As long as the person doesn't test positive, they're not taking drugs.” - Richard Virenqu
  – See: the 50% hematocrit threshold
If time: Similar Remedies for Similar Symptoms

• Similarly: it’s OK to condemn unfair play etc....

• ...But doping-type demonizing and moralism should be avoided!
  – Yes. It might be had.
If time: Bayer Leverkusen 2013: (Unconfessed) Phantom Goal