

CHEATING, SPORTSMANSHIP AND THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT

Cheating is an important issue in sports ethics. In recent years, the question of cheating seems to have been predominated by drug issues. A consensus on cheating in sport has been achieved on important issues regarding 'doping'. However, cheating does not merely cover doping issues. In other words, cheating in sport has many faces. For example, cheating by using new technology such as changing the shape of a racket and its weight. The use of disqualified players, athletes or teams can also improve participants' advantages or the possibility of winning a game.

Cheating in sport is often thought as breaking the rules of the game. However, this may not necessarily be the case. In order to strengthen this thesis, two tasks were undertaken. First, a numbers of instances of cheating and sportsmanship in sports have been reviewed during the Modern Olympic Games, which is one of the highest level sports contests in the world with a major impact on the global sports society. The investigation showed that although 'breaking the written rules of a game' is often related to cheating, the unwritten rules are the essential factor. They are the spirits of the game and they evoke the associated concept of 'sportsmanship'.

Therefore, the second task was to investigate the relationship between the Olympic spirit and participants' ethics. The Olympic spirit has been stressed as representing good values of an ideal human being. However, paradoxically many would wonder whether the Olympic spirit contradicts or confronts participants' ethics concerning the appropriate behaviour. Key values

by Li-Hong Hsu*



enshrined in the Olympic spirit can be considered as:

- Amateurism
- Citius, Altius, Fortius (Faster, Higher and Stronger-the Olympic motto)
- Taking part (the Olympic creed)
- Fair play (including mutual respect, anti-racism, friendship, tolerance, honesty, sympathy and fairness)

Thus, the following paradoxical questions have been raised:

- Does 'amateurism' promote cheating?
- Does 'the Olympic motto' imply 'winning is everything', and thus confront 'the Olympic creed'?
- Can doping be justified?
- Is the idea of 'fair play' better than that of sportsmanship to judge participants' appropriate behaviour?

These questions can be answered as follows. First of all, the investigation showed that amateurism or amateur spirit has been misinterpreted as 'amateur rules', which could not solve the problem concerning athlete's appropriate behaviour. The former stresses participants' state of mind and state of act, whereas the latter was established by the IOC, which were based on the English higher social class and therefore could never be seen as objective moral principles.

Secondly, the concept of 'the Olympic Motto' and the attitude of 'winning is everything' are contrastingly interesting: the former stresses 'individual progress' which is trying to pursue excellence, the latter 'to conquer others' which is to see the opponents as enemy or pure objects. Thus, that is to say clearly that the Olympic motto does not contradict 'the Olympic creed'. By contrast, they could complement each other, since the former can be interpreted as 'to do one's best' whereas the latter represents 'winning is less important than taking part'.

Thirdly, there are three major reasons (athletes' health, medical and sports ethics, and equal chance) why the IOC thinks that doping cannot be justified. It also appears that further considerations need to be concerned such as 'unharmful drugs', 'real equality' and 'resource distribution' among participants in different regions.

Finally, the idea of 'fair play' has been stressed more than that of 'good sportsmanship' to judge participants' behaviour. The latter may not be enough to judge a fair and well-matched game, since it is often related to a participant's comportment and good manner. Although it is not clear that most people at this stage would easily accept that the idea of fair play is more than that of good sportsmanship, the tendency seems to be there. As fair play is one of the essential spirits of Olympism, it also illuminates a healthy hope for our future sport.

*University of Leeds, School of Philosophy. Postgraduate research grant programme 1999 Museum and Olympic Studies Centre, Lausanne.