

SPORT AND ETHICS IN UNIFIED GERMANY - A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Introduction

The night the Berlin Wall came down, November 9, 1989, marks the beginning of a new era for the formerly divided Germany, which gave rise to a new social and political order based on social-democratic principles. With the fall of socialism, the East German's superb top-level sport system had to fall as well, because it was directly tied to the political structure of its government. East German sport since has been placed under the authority of the West German Sports Federation.

Since the unification, the investigative media has uncovered the illegal practices among top-level athletes, their coaches and the administrative apparatus in both parts of the country, but mainly in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). The current problems in organized top-level sport, for example, doping and unfairness, have not been systematically analyzed from the viewpoint of sport ethics. This dilemma will become more apparent when the former two German sport organizations are searching for an adequate, new sport concept. The meaning of top-level sport will have to be reconsidered, and the consequences of the current practices in top-level sport will have to be taken into account.

This study assumes that a new sport ethics can only be developed by critically analyzing the existing sport practices within its social realm. First, the current situation of top-level sport in Germany will be examined taking the historical development into account. Second, upon critical reflection of this situation a theoretical construct for a new sport ethics will be proposed.

1. Top-level Sport in Unified Germany

1.1. Historical Development

After World War II Germany was divided into two countries, East Germany or the GDR (German Democratic Republic) controlled by the Russians, and West Germany or the FRG ("Federal Republic of Germany") controlled by the British, French and the US. In the field of sports, East Germany founded the so-called "German Sports Board" in 1948 as its central and umbrella institution for sport. In 1950, West Germany founded its sport organization, the "German Sports Association." The "National Olympic Committee" (NOC) for West Germany was established in 1949. The East Germans established their own NOC in 1951, but it did not receive official accreditation by the International Olympic Committee until 1965.

Germany, as a former belligerent nation, had not been allowed to participate in the 1948 Olympics in London. However, when the Eastern NOC agreed in May 1951 to go with one German Olympic team to the Olympics in Oslo and Helsinki next year, they were severely

reprimanded by Walter Ulbricht, chairman of the Central Committee of the socialist party of the GDR, not to do so before the official recognition of the NOC of the GDR by the IOC. However, as this official accreditation did not come before October 1965, West Germany alone had to go to the 1952 Olympics. In 1955 the NOC of the GDR was “provisionally” accredited by the IOC but obliged to participate in the future Olympics only in a joint team composed of East and West Germany. And this held for the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, 1960 in Rome, and 1964 in Tokyo, for a period of almost 10 years.

From one Olympiad to the next one, the GDR members in the joint Olympic team of both Germanies became stronger and stronger. And so it happened that the East German athletes had won more medals at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo than their colleagues from the West, which continued to be the case in all following Olympic Games. From 1968 onwards there were two separate German teams participating at the Olympic Games until 1992, when there will be again one German team.

1.2. Organization of Sport in East and West Germany

Before the fall of the wall the GDR sport was administered by organizations entirely dependent upon the socialist party. Sport was regulated and steered from the party center, and for the benefit of mainly top-level sport. To prove the superiority of the socialist system, enormous sums of money were poured into sports. This was done at the expense of sports and physical education for the community. The party and its apparatus regulated the sphere of sports in such a perfection that the successes of the GDR had become almost miraculous. The secret to their success was the early selection of sportive talents among children at the age of four or five, the systematic training of these youngsters in the children and youth sport schools, the continuation of very regimented training practices in sport clubs subsidized and controlled by police, army, and the government, and the now well-established doping practices, even among teenage athletes. Only sports that had a chance to bring numerous gold medals home, such as track and field, gymnastics, and swimming, - and thus would contribute to the glory of the socialist system - , received excessive support. Team sports such as soccer, although the favorite sport among East and West Germans, was the stepchild in the GDR.

The total control of top-level athletics in the GDR turned their athletes into servants for their country. Today, these athletes reveal that they lived a very sheltered and privileged life, disconnected from the harsh reality of the average East German. The psychological hurdles of the unification were extremely felt by these athletes because they favored the communist system. Consequently, after the wall, GDR sport fell into a sort of vacuum, when the prerogative of the socialist party was abolished and when GDR sport suddenly lost its steering center.

Quite differently from the GDR, FRG sports were and still are based on a federal system, that is to say, every federal state is guaranteed its autonomy to regulate its own culture and its sports. Sport in the democratic West was geared toward leisure and fitness pursuits. The principal aim of the sport movement in the West was the implementation of the motto “sport for all” in the 50’s, which includes children, women, the elderly, and the physically and mentally retarded. Top-level athletics in the FRG used not to receive special funding until 1967, when Josef Neckerman, a wealthy business man and gold medalist, established a financial-aid-fund for elite athletes, which only comes to about 400 US dollars a month for the individual. However, the West German athletes could not live off these small stipends and their future after sports was not secured either. The West German athletes were

self-determined individuals and did not necessarily identify with their country. They did not have to prove the superiority of their social system through sportive achievements.

In comparison to the support East German top-level sport received, sport funding in the FRG was relatively small and insignificant. In the GDR, 2 billion dollars were pumped into sport each year from the centralized government, which came to about 0.8% of the government spending (twice as much as they used to admit), while the FRG spent 70 Million per year.

Due to an extensive system of finding and cultivating talent in children's sport schools as well as the expertise and the number of coaches, trainers, and sport scientists, whose careers were devoted to the enhancement of athletic performance, the former GDR produced top-level athletes. There was one coach for every two/three athletes, while in the West the ratio is one coach for twenty athletes (Tedeschi, p. 49). The primary difference is money.

When contracts for a reunification were developed, the home minister of Germany was not too keen, of course, to preserve a sports system filled from top to bottom with obedient socialists. But at the last moment, the West wanted to keep the East German "gold medal forge." And so it happened that the three major sport research institutes, the "Research Institute for Physical Culture and Sport" in Leipzig, the "Doping-Laboratory" in Kreischa, and the "Institute for the Development of Sport Equipment" in Berlin were kept (Kölner Stadtanzeiger, 04.10.1990), for the only reason that they had been incorporated in the official reunification contract. All the other East German sport institutions were given up, respectively left at the discretion of the 5 new federal states. East German sport schools are closed, 85% of the 4000 East German coaches have already left, 35 Olympic training centers are gone, and many athletes have left for the West (Tedeschi, p. 49). From a political point of view, this was the only sensible thing to do. However, in regard to top-level sport this decision marks the end of the gold medal showers.

There is no doubt that the sport scientists from East Germany have been among the leading scholars in their field in the world for quite some time. Their sole focus was the improvement of top-level sports. The secret of their success was the direct application of their knowledge to the practice of sport. The world famous Forschungsinstitut für Körperkultur und Sport (FKS) [Research Institute for Physical Culture and Sport] in Leipzig was the centralized and independent research institute for sport sciences in the GDR with a staff of more than 600 members researching fifteen different sports (dvs-Informationen, 1990, p. 10). Social scientists were hired to develop educational programs for the indoctrination of their ideology into the athletes. Some of the research projects undertaken were, for example, to develop anabolics which would slow down the aging process of the brain, or to increase the motivation of athletes sending electronic streams through the brain. Blood doping was another one of many highly debated research projects that were kept top secret by either locking the information in sealed safes or by personally shredding it in the institutionally owned paper shredder.

The existence of the FKS research institute was not known by many people in the GDR and its research was top secret. These scientists did not share any of their research outcomes when they attended research conferences, - which did not happen all too often anyway -, but they collected every research information in the field of sports from all over the world. Because there was no sharing of research information and freedom of research never existed, the East German scientists were not as ahead on certain issues as their Western counterparts, but their direct application of the research findings along with their close network of all sport sciences and their central organization were the key to their success in terms of the enormous

outcome of top-level performance in sport as we all know of.

The counterpart of the FKS in the West is the Bundesinstitut für Sportwissenschaft (BISp) [Federal Institute of Sport Sciences] in Cologne, which only coordinates the research in the area of sport science. The research itself is done by scholars at the universities, who at the same time have teaching obligations as well. Recently, the newly formed government has decided to restructure the FKS and to make it a part of the Deutsche Hochschule für Körnerkultur (DHfK), the sport university in Leipzig. This implies that there will be about 220 scientists, a third of its former staff, without teaching obligations continuing to conduct research on top-level performance in sport. With this move, the politicians in charge of this decision hope to ensure a continuation of the world class achievements in sports, for which the East Germans were so famous.

The new name for the institute shall be Forschungsinstitut für Trainingswissenschaften (FIT), [Research Science Institute for Sport Training]. Western scholars fear that such a development might eventually undermine the “sport for all” focus, since it will receive independent funding from the government; and thus, it is resisted because it undermines the motto of the newly revised German constitution (article 39, paragraph 2, see Deutschland Archiv, October 1990), where autonomy, freedom of research, pluralism and competition shall be the standard decision making factors.

1.3. Problems of Top-level Sport in Unified Germany

1.3.1. Exodus or In Search of a New Identity

After the GDR athletes had been allowed free travel, something they had not known for twenty-eight years, they tried to become professionals in the West. Their top coaches followed apace. If there were no positions in West Germany for them, they went to Italy, Austria, Holland, England, and even to Australia (Spiegel, 41/1991). However, many East German athletes find themselves in a state of disarray, an identity crisis. They have problems to adopt to their newly won freedom. All their life they have been told what to do; in their training of course, and even in their personal life everything was regulated for them. Suddenly, they have to make decisions on their own rather than following orders. Their reaction is fear and uncertainty about the future, which takes away from their tremendous motivation. Under the old system, they did not have to worry about their well-being, even after sports. Athletes were taken care of by the government; after quitting sport they would receive retirement money and a job as well. The GDR had a superb system for the individual athlete as long as they contributed to the representation of the superiority of their social system. But as persons, the athletes often lacked the abilities to think on their own, to make decisions and to be creative. Their system turned out great sport machines, but prevented the individual athlete from becoming a responsible and mature individual.

East German athletes in unified Germany will not receive the same financial support as in the past. They will have to find a job in order to support themselves and they will receive a small stipend (Sporthilfe) from the German Sport Organisation. 5000 athletes are receiving sports aid now, 2962 of which are from the former GDR (Frankfurter Allgemeine, 19.01.1991).

The identity crisis is also found within the East German academic institutions and their scholars. At the beginning of 1990, most of the academic institutions of the GDR looked for partners in the FRG, at the same time trying to market and sell their expertise in the field

of top-level sports for cash. Many academicians from the East turned around trying to whitewash their former publications under the socialist system. But almost no university offered them a position in West-Germany. However, there are exceptions such as the East German doping expert for track and field, Dr. Hartmut Riedel, who was - nevertheless or because of his expertise - hired as professor at the University in Bayreuth. Just recently, several more cases have been revealed where former East-German doping experts as well as their most successful coaches have been hired by other countries, such as China, in the hope to transform or continue the "East German sport wonder" in their own country. In unified Germany, however, the former East German sport officials and scientists are still awaiting their court date yet, such as Hartmut Riedel, who has been charged with bodily injury (Spiegel, 41/1991). This list goes on and on.

1.3.2 East German Sport - Bankrupt?

After the fall of the wall, the interest in sport among the East German population drastically dwindled. Only 50 % of those who used to regularly participate in sport continued doing so; thus the number of sport participants decreased to only 7% of the East German people compared to about 30% of the Westerners. Also, sport in East Germany since has lost a lot of spectators due to several reasons: people now turn their back to the former privileged elite athletes, the ticket prices for sport events went up, many top-level athletes have left the country, and most of all, the economic situation in the five new states is devastating. The high unemployment rate has led to increased devastation and aggression, which is reflected in the appearance of more widespread hooliganism. In addition, the 35.000 sport facilities in the former GDR are in very bad shape and need urgent repair (DSB Presse, 13-14/1991). However, the communities have no money to do so, and the government is not responsible. The only hope is that the sport clubs in East Germany will receive money in the future from taxation of lottery games such as Toto and Lotto, as the sport clubs in the West do (DSB Presse, 9/26.02.1991). But as long as these laws are not established, the situation of sport in the Eastern part of Germany is devastating.

1.3.3. The Doping-Controversy

Similar to the Ben Johnson affair, the disclosure of doping in the GDR elite sports and the fact that the doping lab in Kreischa had not only prevented but continuously applied, tested and even improved doping shocked the West German sporting morals. The expenditure of drug use in the former GDR seems to have greatly exceeded all suppositions. It is shocking to hear that often athletes were forced by their coaches to take the drugs, or they were told that the pills they were swallowing were vitamins or other harmless substances. All GDR athletes, before entering into any competition in the West had been checked in Kreischa, whether they were "clean" or not before departure.

One day after the other, the leading newspapers disclose new doping cases in the East: "Doping in GDR Swimming," "Systematic Doping for decades in Kreischa," "324 cases of doping in the GDR," and so on.

The recently published book Doping Dokumente - Von der Forschung zum Betrug by Brigitte Berendonk (1991) reveals more shocking news about the doping practices among virtually all top-level athletes in the former GDR, who are listed by names. The headline of another article reads "Death or male formation" and tells how doped female athletes have often walked on a thin line between death and becoming man-like. In some cases of famous sprinters such as Barbel Wöckel and Marita Koch it was found that their anabolic intake was higher, almost twice as much, than that of Ben Johnson, when he was stripped of his gold medal. Even teenage athletes, as young as 14 years old, would take anabolics, which would

slow down or even stop their female development and at the same time create stronger athletes serving to gain glory for their country. Negative side-effects such as liver damage, severe acne, genital male formations, facial hair and psychological, formations did not stop trainers, doctors, scientists, coaches and athletes involved to discontinue these life threatening practices. Just recently, documents revealing experiments testing various combinations of drugs on teenagers being trained at state run sport schools were found. To give high dosage of male hormones to teenage girls was “legal” practice under the East German system, while in the West this was considered a medical crime. The athletes had to sign papers swearing secrecy. If athletes refused to take the drugs or if their bodies did not tolerate them, they were thrown out of the sport schools and the training programs.

The athletes would follow doping plans, which were researched and set up for everybody individually for several years in advance, usually in a four year Olympic cycle. Twelve days before major sporting events, the athletes would restrain from taking drugs orally, but would continue with injections until hours before the events. This practice as well as the previous check-ups in Kreischa prevented East German athletes from ever having tested positive during international doping controls. Those who tested positive back home were simply restricted from travelling to the sporting events. Doping in the GDR was very much organized like the army. Doping plans were kept top secret in locked and sealed safes and must have appeared to the novice like a very complicated computer program.

However, the East Germans were not alone; doping practices continue in international sports. But the doping experiments in East Germany display a lack of humanity toward the countries athletes. The protocols of the research documents read like the ones found in some of the most inhumane experiments of the SS or other doctors of the 3rd Reich. Berlin investigators are now launched against the East German scientists who administered the doping programs. The Sport Research Institute in Leipzig claims all doping research has been stopped immediately after the collapse of the communist government. Still, the revelations have raised concerns that German sport teams in the future will secretly adopt some of the East German doping practices. Officials of the German Sport Association vehemently deny such plans, although we now know that many top athletes in the West have also been practicing doping as regular part of their training routine since 1978 (Berendonk, p. 234ff). Berendonk suspects that doping will continue to be a regular part of top-level athletics in the future, not only in unified Germany; but experts will make sure that these practices are kept under greater secrecy and that regular doping controls in the laboratories in Kreischa and Cologne before major sporting events will prevent athletes from ever testing positive (p. 294).

In sum, the East German sport system was a highly centralized apparatus, which cannot be a model for a democratic unity. Sport was used as a political tool to promote the socialist ideology. The athlete was also a tool within the sport system, who was only respected and supported if he/she was successful. This is dehumanizing. A politically governed sport has no place in unified Germany. As the former East German Olympic gold medalist Jürgen May put it: “If one wants to copy the East German top-level sport, one has to copy the social order of the German Democratic Republic as well” (Voigt, p. 86). Thus, sport in unified Germany needs to receive a new social political meaning as well as a new ethical construct; therein lie its chances.

2. Toward a New Sport Ethics

The unification of Germany is a good occasion for reexamining the Eastern as well as the

so-called Western approach to sport in order to learn from this historic situation by redefining the own approach taking ethical concerns into consideration. The effectiveness alone never should be the criteria for the evaluation of a sport system, says Haag, only in combination with objectiveness and contents of sport and physical education, which can be accepted under a humanistic point of view (1990, p. 44).

The unification of Germany and its sport system is a slowly growing process, which needs to be based on a common set of values. The Germans have the historic chance to give new meaning to sport, that is, to provide a higher status of sport in society in general and to restructure top-level sport. A reflection of ethical and moral principles in sport and an implementation of a new sport ethics can lead to a more democratic and humane sport system.

What is ethical, moral behavior in sport ? The key word to ethical and moral behavior is responsibility. In the literature, responsibility is regarded as the characteristic of ethical considerations; that is, the engagement of myself into the action. Such engagement can only be undertaken in a free and voluntary manner and is the prerequisite for any ethical actions, says Schulz (1985). In regard to ethics, responsibility for other human beings has expanded in the last 10-20 years to the responsibility for the world, the nature and the cosmos as such, since we have become aware that not only human beings are vulnerable, but the environment as well.¹

This understanding of ethics goes beyond Kant's approach, in that it calls for actions whose effects should promote the permanence of a truly humane life on earth (Jonas, 1979, p. 36). Kant's ethics were based on the idea that there are moral norms valid for every person, that everybody must adhere to freely. While Kant's categorical imperative was directed toward the individual, Jonas' ethics refer to the public life in general, including politics.

Lenk (1975) and Lenk/Pilz (1989) also constructed timely ethics starting with the concept of responsibility and applying it to sport. Through ethical considerations they are proposing the improvement of the moral dilemmas in sport, such as the ones revealed in the former GDR: the total manipulation of individuals socially, physically, and psychologically; the "end justifying the means" approach; the experimentation with human subjects, even without their knowledge, for example doping; the political usage of sport for the promotion of ideologies, and more.² Lenk calls for sport ethics that are directly related to the current practices and problems in sport. Before I will elaborate on the ethics of sport, a clarification of the terms ethics and morality has to be established.

In the general usage of the language, the terms ethics and morality are often used interchangeably. Meinberg makes the following distinction between ethics and morals: Moral behavior are actions that are based on certain basic values and norms of society, while ethics

¹ In recent years, a new field of ethics has emerged from the concerns of the environment: "environmental ethics" (see Jonas, 1987; Birnbacher, 1980; Auer, 1985).

² These ethical dilemmas in sport are not solely found in the former GDR.

represent the reflection of such behavior. That is, ethics are the reflection of moral behavior (Meinberg, 1991, p. 21). In regard to sport, ethics are the theory of the moral behavior in sport. Thus, the task of a sport ethics is to critically reflect on the phenomenon of sport within its social and cultural setting.

Sport ethics is also tied to a specific ethos, the sport ethos. This means, the ethos refers only to the specific situation, here sport, and has no consequences for other spheres of life. The athlete, who acts morally right within the sportive situation, must not necessarily act accordingly in other situations of life. Hence, sport ethics are special ethics, but they are always dependent on ethics in general, in that they apply general norms, values, ideals and imperatives to the specific situation of and within sport.

Sport receives its meaning within the context of the social and cultural life. Sport ethics, then, become valid only within general ethics that incorporate the whole of the human being and of life as such. Thus, the autonomy of sport ethics is only relative in that it depends on ethics and moral values in society in general. What might be right in one society, might be considered wrong in another, for example, doping in the East and West. Ethical theories can only describe, analyze, and understand the current situation of sport. The ethicist can also propose betterment for sport, but in so doing he/she first has to lay out what “good sport” is; that is, what actions are considered morally right. The critical function of sport ethics is to correct the apparent problems of sport, in order to make it better for the future. Sport ethics then need to work out proposals for a “clean” sport.

Sport ethics differ from ethics in other spheres of life, such as environmental ethics, in that they are not critical for survival. Usually people engage in sport freely. Since sport is not existentially necessary, sport ethics are not necessary for survival either; but they are important for the athletes and everybody else engaged in sport such as trainers, coaches, sport administrators, empires, fans, and more.

Meinberg explains in accordance with Franke (1989) that historically sport ethics have solely been applied to the individual athlete as such.³ These ethical theories did not acknowledge that people live in rather complex societies, which might require a variety of different moral behaviors according to each specific situation. In our pluralistic society there is not just one moral principle or ethos, which is ultimately right or valid for every situation. Thus, the old saying that “sport teaches character and morale” cannot simply be transferred to other spheres of life in general. Meinberg requests pluralism for the realm of sport ethics, which he calls “meta-ethics.” The object of ethics is moral behavior, the object of meta-ethics is ethics. Thus, meta-ethics is a highly theoretical construct, which acknowledges that sport as a complex phenomenon needs to be analyzed theoretically in its structure and within its social system. Meta-ethics does not come up with any proposals for right or wrong behavior in sport. A critical analysis of the ethics of the current sport system and its structure is the object of meta-ethics in sport.

From a meta-ethical viewpoint, then, the question arises: is competitive sport a paradox in itself? In top-level sport the athlete’s actions do not display individual, isolated moral behavior. Franke points out that the individual top-level athlete is at the same time a sport

³ See Aristoteles, Platon, Rousseau, Gutschmuths, Diem - just to name a few.

idol (p. 36), produced by politics in the East and by the media in the West. Ethical considerations usually assume that the person, whose actions are morally judged and valued, is identical with the person who is acting. As in the doping case of Ben Johnson, he was stripped of his gold medal because it was assumed that his steroid use was unethical behavior on his part, the failure of Ben Johnson as a person. This incidence was not morally looked at within the context of top-level sport. It is not acknowledged here that athletes have dual-personalities, the athlete as the individual person and the athlete as the sport idol, produced by the media.

Gebauer (1983, 1987) has also elaborated on the dilemma of the media producing a reality of competition that is fictional; and thus, it is not identical with reality of life as such. For sport ethics it is important to distinguish between these two different realities, as it is usually done in other spheres of our cultural life, for example, in theater and film. We know that the actors in theater, film and other artistic productions are playing a role, which is not identical with who the actors are as individual persons. But within the sphere of sport we tend to believe that the athletic achievements are identical with the athletes as persons (Franke, p. 38), while in reality the athlete is reduced to the achievement principle: faster, higher, further. And thus, through the athletic achievement the athlete receives an imaginary personality, which is not necessarily identical with the athlete as a person. The athlete then is transformed into an idol, and when the idol does not live up to the moral expectations, such as in the Ben Johnson case, the hero becomes the bad person. Or in the case of East-German athletes: after unification people started to turn their backs to the formerly glorified athletes, who were used by their system.

As described, particularly in former GDR sport, the athlete was reduced to a function, a political tool in order to promote the socialist ideology. The wide-spread doping practices among East German athletes fits here very well, because they just did what they were asked to do; there was no base for making any decisions freely. This represents an extreme case of manipulation of the athletes, but are we so much better in the West? Are athletes in the West truly self-determined individuals? Athletes follow the orders of coaches and administrators; and in schools and universities in the USA they are also used as political tools to promote these institutions. The public seems to be in need of sport idols and the media covers this need, but when the athletes fail to live up to these falsely set high moral standards, they are ridiculed.

From an ethical viewpoint, Franke concludes, top-level sport is a paradox; because on one hand, competitive sport calls for actions leading to the disadvantage for others, and on the other hand, it cries out for fairness and equal chances for all competitors. The two rules of top-level sport, to overcome the opponent by any means that are legal or appear to be legal and to act fairly and morally sound at the same time, are contradicting each other. Hence, taking drugs in order to gain an advantage over your opponent confirms to the first norm set out by competitive sport, that is, to overcome the opponent; but it conflicts with the second rule of equal chances and fairness. The top-level athlete has to juggle between these two requests, which are presented to him/her by the structure of the sport system. What are the athletes supposed to do, how should they act? "Play fair" is the rather simplistic answer of traditional sport moralists.

Representatives of the "old" sport ethics assume that the norms of sportive competition are valid in general. Problems arise when it is argued that sport, as an isolated phenomenon in society, has educational values as such, for example, that it teaches character and

sportsmanship. And when - as in the case of Ben Johnson - this thesis or norm is disproved, he becomes declared the sinner or der Sündenbock, as Gebauer puts it, in order to justify the traditionally created normative structure of sport. Sport ethics today seem to use two different approaches in their argumentation. First, appeals are made, such as “be fair,” “stay fit,” or “don’t take drugs.” Here it is falsely assumed that these appeals will lead to the establishment of appropriate actions or that in and of themselves, they will change behavior. Second, in the argumentation of sport ethics it is assumed that general values such as health, humanity, self-determination, and more will influence the actions within the realm of sport. It is overlooked that general norms do not necessarily lead to “right actions.” Since the world we live in is ever-changing and becoming more complex, ethical norms are changing, too. The conditions and the structure of sport have changed over this century. Thus, the engagement in sport does not necessarily lead to self-development or self-determination of the athletes, as it once was assumed. In top-level sport especially, the sole focus has become the achievement rather than the physical, social, and psychological development of the people involved. Hence, we are in need of a new ethics, which provides grounds for an ethical evaluation of specific actions within a concrete situation (Franke, p. 43).

Sport ethics must reflect on the presuppositions of concrete moral actions before it can propose a betterment for moral actions in sport. A structural analysis of sport in society has to be the starting point of a new sport ethics. If the structure of top-level sport with its overemphasis on winning and its “means justifying the end” approach does not change, there is little hope for changing the unethical practices in top-level sport. As long as we continue to blame the individual athlete for his/her actions, we are only justifying the systems needs, that is, we cover up the real problems in sport. If the basic structure of sport promotes unethical behavior, as we have seen not only in the former GDR, the athletes and others involved in sport are not going to act morally right.

Hence, sociologists, philosophers, pedagogues, and sport scientists from all areas need to work together in order to propose a new sport ethics, a meta-ethics as Meinberg calls it, - and not only the sport philosophers. A cooperative approach in research among scientists as it was displayed to us in the former GDR is a good idea, as long as it is not misused for the good of the system rather than the individual. Therein lie the chances for top-level sport, - not only in unified Germany.

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