



PHYSICS
WALLAH

EDITORIAL - 1

Must Read

CAT and OMETS



Editorial 1 – (The Hindu Delhi Edition)

Directions (1-4) Read the following passage and answer the given questions.

Performance-enhancing vices are defects of character, or traits that otherwise detract from a well-ordered, flourishing life, which help one become a more successful sportsperson. In general, we can identify them by asking ourselves whether certain traits that help us be competitive in sports also impede our ability to be loving friends or responsible citizens. These vices may undermine our ability to have a long view of sports and life – to think sustainably about how we use our bodies – and they can prevent us from maintaining a balance of interests outside the sport.

Should such a class of vices exist – and I am going to argue that it does – these vices will be an insidious issue, difficult to root out. This is because, in submitting ourselves to the objectives of a sport, we ‘put on’ the kinds of traits that support performance. Some of these are physical traits, like agility and flexibility, that help us move down the field or court. Others are character traits – patterns of thinking, feeling and acting – such as envy, pride or rashness – that permit us to go to the proverbial well, or to get the most out of ourselves.

In the case of patience and perseverance, these traits are constitutive features of a good character, sports aside. They are the kinds of traits we would like to have in a neighbour or a friend. Should sport participation provide the opportunity to practise these virtues, or to grow in these respects, then this is a welcome opportunity to be refined. But in trying to become faster or stronger, we might also find ourselves changing in ways that are at odds with the kinds of people we want to be outside of sport. I have already named dishonesty – regarding cheating behaviour – as a vice that can make a runner faster. I described selfishness, too – as a trait that enhanced my own performances yet eroded relationships. Additional examples are pride, intransigence and envy.

If you spend much time around sports, you will have experienced the vice of pride, or superbia. It is an inordinate desire for one’s own excellence, or an inflated sense of self. Likely, you have experienced pride so much in sports that you fail to notice it anymore. Sport, in broad strokes, has a culture of bragging and self-aggrandisement, which is sometimes called ‘marketing’. Other times, pride hides in plain sight as ‘self-belief’. It sometimes seems that sporting social media is a bunch of people shouting their achievements past each other, bragging in direct or subtle ways. Admittedly, this is probably part of what we enjoy about sports – the self-congratulatory brazenness of it all. It is entertaining.

Pride’s entertainment value is ordered toward the external goods of sport – fame and marketability. It is an asset of sports for that reason. But pride is also performance-relevant, or ordered to internal goods of a competition. It can help us win – not in every case, but in many. Pride commits two errors. The first is an epistemic error. The proud sportsperson perceives themselves to be more capable than they actually are. The second error is an error of valuing. The proud sportsperson believes themselves to be superior to others and prioritises themselves accordingly. Pride’s epistemic error is unlikely to enhance performance. Imagine the runner who perceives her abilities as far greater than they are. She may start a race at a pace commensurate with her projections, then crash and burn. The proud footballer may put himself in a situation above his abilities and lose possession of the ball as a result. To succeed in sports, we need high levels of ability, but we also need to perceive our limits accurately.

However, pride's error of valuing is likely to enhance performance. The sportsperson who over-values himself is inclined to inordinately strive for greatness and to be engaged in the activity of reputation protection. And pride's greatest secret is that it is always under threat. It needs to prove that it is the best. This provides ample motivation to dig deep and fight for glory.

1. **Which of the following statements is MOST consistent with the author's overall argument in the passage?**
 - A. The pursuit of athletic excellence requires the cultivation of both virtues and vices.
 - B. Performance-enhancing vices can lead to success in sports, but they hinder personal growth.
 - C. The benefits of sports participation outweigh the potential negative effects of performance-enhancing vices.
 - D. The pursuit of sporting excellence should be guided by ethical principles and a focus on character development.
2. **The passage implies that the "brazenness" of self-promotion in sports can be seen as a form of:**
 - A. A necessary marketing tactic in an increasingly commercialized sporting landscape.
 - B. A reflection of the inherent competitive spirit that drives athletes to excel.
 - C. A distorted form of self-worth, where validation is sought through external recognition.
 - D. A symptom of a culture that prioritizes individual achievement over teamwork and sportsmanship.
3. **The author's primary purpose in discussing the epistemic error of pride is to show that:**
 - A. Pride often leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy, where athletes underperform due to their inflated sense of ability.
 - B. Pride is a double-edged sword, capable of both motivating athletes and hindering their performance.
 - C. Pride is a natural human emotion that is difficult to control, even in the context of competitive sports.
 - D. Pride can hinder an athlete's growth by blinding them to their limitations and preventing them from seeking improvement.
4. **Based on the passage, which of the following statements is NOT true about performance-enhancing vices?**
 - A. They are often disguised as positive traits like self-belief or competitive spirit, making them difficult to identify.
 - B. They can hinder the development of a well-rounded personality and healthy relationships, affecting life outside of sports.
 - C. They are invariably present in the world of sports, as they are deemed essential for achieving success at any cost.
 - D. They can lead to an inflated sense of self-importance and a disregard for others, impacting social interactions negatively.

Solutions

1. **Essence of the Question**

The question asks us to identify which statement most accurately aligns with the author's overall argument. To solve this, we need to thoroughly understand the passage's key points and central thesis. The author discusses the existence of performance-enhancing vices in sports, their potential benefits for athletic success, and the broader negative implications for personal character and societal roles.

Explanation for the Correct Answer

Option (B) - This is the most consistent with the author's argument. The passage outlines how certain vices, such as pride, selfishness, and envy, can enhance sports performance. These traits can provide motivation and drive to succeed in competitive settings. However, the author also highlights the detrimental effects these vices have on personal growth, relationships, and overall character. The passage emphasizes the conflict between becoming a successful athlete and maintaining a well-rounded, virtuous character.

Explanations for Incorrect Answers

Option (A) - This statement is partially true but not fully aligned with the author's nuanced argument. While the author acknowledges that vices can enhance performance, they don't explicitly argue that both virtues and vices are required for athletic excellence. The passage discusses virtues like patience and perseverance positively but doesn't emphasize their necessity in the same way it does for vices. Therefore, (A) is not the most accurate summary of the author's stance.

Option (C) - This statement contradicts the author's argument. The author is concerned about the insidious nature of performance-enhancing vices and their long-term negative impacts on personal character and societal roles. The passage does not suggest that the benefits of sports participation unequivocally outweigh these negative effects. Thus, (C) misrepresents the author's perspective.

Option (D) - While this statement represents a desirable ideal, it does not reflect the main argument of the passage. The author is more focused on describing the reality of performance-enhancing vices in sports rather than advocating for a solution. Although the author might implicitly support this view, it is not the primary focus of the discussion. Hence, (D) does not accurately capture the essence of the argument.

Trap of the Question

The primary trap in this question lies in the nuances of the author's argument. The passage's complexity might lead readers to overemphasize certain aspects, such as the necessity of virtues (as in (A)) or the benefits of sports participation (as in (C)). Another trap is the idealistic solution offered in (D), which could be appealing but does not align with the author's critical examination of current sports culture. Careful reading and understanding of the balance the author strikes between the benefits and drawbacks of performance-enhancing vices is crucial for selecting the correct answer, (B).

2. Essence of the Question

The passage discusses how certain character traits, considered vices in everyday life, can enhance athletic performance. It particularly focuses on pride and its dual errors: epistemic (misjudging one's abilities) and valuing (overestimating oneself). The passage then explores how the culture of sports often includes self-promotion and self-aggrandizement, which can be seen as part of marketing or as a deeper reflection of pride. The question asks to identify how the passage implies this brazenness of self-promotion in sports.

Explanation for the Correct Answer

Option (C) - The passage delves into the concept of pride in sports, describing it as an inordinate desire for personal excellence and a perception of superiority over others. This form of pride is often exhibited through self-promotion and self-aggrandizement, especially on social media. The passage suggests that athletes might seek validation and recognition through these external displays of success, which is indicative of a distorted form of self-worth. Instead of internal satisfaction or intrinsic motivation, the athlete's self-esteem becomes contingent on external accolades and the admiration of others.

Explanations for Incorrect Answers

Option (A) - While the passage acknowledges that self-promotion can be seen as 'marketing' and part of the entertainment value of sports, it does not emphasize this aspect as the primary implication. The focus is more on the psychological and character-based aspects of pride rather than on the commercial necessity. The passage hints at the entertainment and marketing angle but frames it within the context of pride and self-worth.

Option (B) - The passage does describe pride as contributing to performance by pushing athletes to strive for greatness and protect their reputation. However, it critically examines pride as a vice rather than as a mere reflection of competitive spirit. The emphasis is on the negative aspects of pride, such as an inflated sense of self and the need for external validation, rather than simply attributing it to healthy competitiveness.

Option (D) - The passage does touch on how pride can lead to an inflated sense of self and self-promotion. However, it does not directly argue that this is due to a cultural shift prioritizing individual achievement over teamwork. The main focus is on how pride manifests in athletes' behavior and self-perception, not explicitly on cultural values about individual versus team achievements.

Trap of the Question

The trap in this question lies in the nuanced way the passage discusses pride and self-promotion. Each option contains a grain of truth, reflecting different facets of the discussion. However, the passage's main argument centers around pride as a character flaw manifesting in self-promotion as a form of distorted self-worth. This makes option (C) the most aligned with the passage's deeper analysis, whereas the other options capture peripheral or secondary points.

3. Essence of the Question

The question asks about the author's primary purpose in discussing the epistemic error of pride within the context of sports. The focus is on understanding why the author mentions this specific aspect of pride and what point he is trying to convey about its impact on athletic performance..

Explanation for the Correct Answer

Option (D) - The author discusses the epistemic error of pride, which is the misperception of one's abilities. This error causes athletes to overestimate their capabilities, leading to unrealistic expectations and potential underperformance. The main point the author makes is that this overestimation can prevent athletes from recognizing their true limits and areas that need improvement. As a result, they may not seek the necessary training or adjustments to enhance their performance. This is in line with the idea that pride can blind athletes to their shortcomings and hinder their growth, making it the most fitting choice.

Explanations for Incorrect Answers

Option (A) - While the author does mention that the epistemic error of pride can lead to underperformance (such as starting a race too fast and then crashing), the primary focus is not on the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead, the discussion centers more on the broader impact of pride on an athlete's perception and the resulting hindrance to growth and improvement. This answer narrows down the scope too much and does not capture the full extent of the author's argument.

Option (B) - The passage does address both positive and negative aspects of pride, with the epistemic error and error of valuing showing different impacts. However, the specific discussion about the epistemic error focuses solely on the negative side – the hindrance to performance due to overestimation of abilities. Therefore, this answer is too broad and does not pinpoint the author's main argument in discussing the epistemic error.

Option (C) - While pride being a natural human emotion is implied, the passage does not focus on the difficulty of controlling pride. The author's discussion about the epistemic error specifically addresses the misperception and its consequences on performance. This answer deviates from the specific purpose of discussing the epistemic error and shifts focus to the general nature of pride, which is not the central point the author is making.

Trap of the Question

The trap in this question lies in the minute difference between recognizing the general characteristics of pride and understanding the specific purpose of discussing the epistemic error of pride. Choices (A) and (B) are particularly tricky because they are partially true but do not fully capture the author's intent in this particular part of the passage. The distinction between discussing pride's general impact and its specific epistemic error can mislead readers into choosing an answer that is too broad or not focused enough on the specific point being made. Additionally, (C) might attract those who interpret the discussion as a commentary on the nature of pride rather than its specific impact on athletic performance. The correct answer requires a precise understanding that the author is focusing on how the misperception of abilities due to pride can prevent athletes from seeking necessary improvement, thus hindering their growth.

4. Essence of the Question

The question asks us to identify which statement about performance-enhancing vices is NOT true, based on the given passage. Performance-enhancing vices are described as character traits that help individuals succeed in sports but detract from their overall well-being and ability to maintain healthy relationships and a balanced life.

Explanation for the Correct Answer

Option (C) - The passage does not state that performance-enhancing vices are invariably present in the world of sports. Instead, it suggests that these vices can develop as a result of the competitive nature of sports, but it does not claim that they are always present or that they are essential for success. The passage argues that these vices are insidious and can be difficult to root out because they can be mistaken for positive traits. It also discusses how these vices can negatively impact one's personal life and social interactions. However, it does not assert that they are a necessary or universal aspect of sports.

Explanations for Incorrect Answers

Option (A) - This statement is true according to the passage. The passage discusses how pride can be disguised as 'self-belief' and how the culture of sports often involves self-aggrandisement, which can mask these vices as positive traits.

Option (B) - This statement is also true. The passage clearly explains that traits like dishonesty and selfishness, while potentially enhancing sports performance, can erode personal relationships and prevent individuals from maintaining a balanced life.

Option (C) - This statement is true as well. The passage describes how pride involves an inflated sense of self and a belief in one's superiority over others, which can negatively impact social interactions.

Trap of the Question

The trap in this question lies in the subtlety of the word "invariably" in statement (C). While the passage discusses the prevalence and potential benefits of performance-enhancing vices in sports, it does not claim that these vices are always present or that they are essential for success. The other statements are directly supported by the text, making (C) the only option that misrepresents the passage's content.



Here's a table of important vocabulary words from the passage:

Word	Meaning
Vice	A defect or weakness in character, often leading to immoral behaviour.
Flourishing	Thriving, doing well, particularly in a way that contributes to personal growth.
Insidious	Stealthily harmful, subtly harmful or dangerous over time.
Constitutive	Essential or forming a part of something.
Intransigence	Refusal to change one's views or agree on something.
Self-aggrandisement	The act of promoting oneself or one's own importance.
Superbia	Pride or arrogance, specifically in the context of sports.
Bragging	Boasting about one's accomplishments.
Epistemic	Related to knowledge or the study of knowledge.