

Preamble → Christmas Day Truce of 1914

1 in 11,000 high school Basketball players go pro

Discuss the claim that science has a positive impact on sport today

Scope that impact on sports means for both the FANS and the PLAYERS

“Positive impact” – fans able to enjoy spectating and recreational sports more

- Players able to play and compete at high level
- Science can be used to make sports more fair
 - Removal of human error in refereeing – VAR in football, goal-line technology, Hawkeye technology in Tennis
 - Has allowed people to be able to come to their own conclusions and make it harder for controversial cheating cases to occur (no large scale cheating cases since 2006 Juventus cheating scandal in Italy)
- Can enhance sports (Makes sports more fun and intense for spectators as well) – entire spectating atmosphere and experience
 - Nutrition – Cristiano Ronaldo had custom diet hand-crafted by nutritionists made up of yoghurt, avocado, fruit, nuts, and chicken for peak performance
 - Data Science
 - 2008 Champion's League Final Penalty shootout both teams hired German Data Science organisation for the data analysis of over 16,000 penalties
 - Golf Toptracer technology, able to convert trajectory of ball into on-screen graphic for TV audience, revolutionising golf as a spectator sport
- Enhance engagement and audience of sports
 - Social Media – engagement of social media, in-depth analysis allow for better audience
 - Fantasy leagues in Football, American Football, Hockey, Baseball and Basketball increase audience engagement and help improve the outreach of sports
 - Availability of sports – World Cup final 2018 had 3.57 Billion spectators
- Some may argue science makes sports more about technology than skill
 - Swimming – Ban of polyurethane swimsuits in 2010 after introduction in 2008 – cut down on fatigue and give swimmers more buoyancy and speed, resulting in the breaking of 200 records, many of which are unbeatable today
 - Formula One – Mercedes often wins; Even when driver Lewis Hamilton was in quarantine and reserve driver George Russell took over, they still came within a punctured tire of winning anyways
 - However, embodiment of sports is still hard work and meritocracy that is preserved even with technological differences
 - At the highest level, technological differences play insignificant factor in most cases as all individuals and teams have the financial resources to compete
 - At lower levels, nobody has access to such financial resources for unfair science
 - Unlikely to have too big an impact, although we conceded there can still be huge impacts

Wastage of money – Ghost towns like Barcelona

- 13.1 Billion spent on the 2016 Rio De Janeiro olympic games
- Cities like Beijing (2008) and Atlanta (1996) full of empty olympic stadiums, Barcelona (1992) has entire ghost towns used to house athletes
- Athens (2004) cost about 9 billion dollars to build and more than half of stadiums are either empty or in ruins

Counter-arguments:

- Excluding the current situation of the COVID pandemic, many have still considered hosting large sporting events worth the cost
- Ability to spur local economic growth
 - o Local contracting firms hired to build stadium, helps provide locals with employment
- Tourism
 - o Sagrada Familia church in barcelona had a spur in public interest as a result of the tourism brought in by the 1992 olympic games – no longer just a vision, now with fixed deadline target of 2026, 100 year death anniversary of Gaudi
 - o City has become a hub for tourism, from 1.7 million tourists in 1990 and increasing by almost 6 million (more than tripling)
- TV rights – estimated 6 Billion in revenue from hosting the olympics

Sports brings about motivational stories that help many throughout tough periods

- 1992 Barcelona olympics, men's 400m semifinals Derek Redmond of Great Britain tearing right hamstring during race and father ran onto the racetrack and helped the child through to finish the race
- Overcoming the most difficult situations – footballer Leo Messi who lived through life with significant growth defect that made him one of the smallest players and was very difficult against physical opponents
- Never doubt yourself – 2015 Leicester City overcomes 5000:1 odds to win premier league, upsetting much richer and well-funded clubs
- Never say die – 93.20 Aguero and 3 goals in 7 minutes (La Remontada) “While we have 1% chance we have 99% faith”

Human Rights issues

- 2022 Qatar World Cup
 - o More than 6500 workers have died during construction on football stadiums for the world cup
 - o Netherlands and German national teams have protested the hosting during their world cup qualifying matches but to no avail
- More than 2 million people between Seoul 1988 and Beijing 2008 olympics evicted from their homes according to 2008 report by Swiss Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
- 2016 Rio Olympics
 - o 12 Billion spent on the richer areas of Rio at the expense of Favelas and Slums that were neglected and whose occupants could not even afford to attend the games

Sporting Corruption/Cheating

- 2005-06 Calciopoli Italian football match fixing scandal which saw champions Juventus stripped of its title and relegated, together with more than 15 officials being imprisoned for up to 3 years
 - o Resulted in huge exodus of players from Italian football, resulted in many of the stars like Kaka and Ronaldinho joining Spanish football
- 2018 NCAA Basketball corruption – unfairness and cheating in sports

Sporting Discrimination

- Racism (Fans)
 - o Karim Benzema “When I score, I am French, when I don't, I am Arab”
 - o EURO 2021: Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka became victims of huge amounts of online racism – murals vandalised etc.
- Racism (Organisational)

- Soul Cap is designed for the thicker curlier hair of black swimmers, and are built to provide better fit and protect their hair. Do not offer unfair advantage
- Claim that the cap “did not follow the natural shape of the head”
- Outlawed at every level of the sport
- Many have felt that this decision was a barrier to many black youths joining the sport as a whole and missing out all the merits it provides
- Two-time olympic medallist for the USA Lia Neal said that she had to sacrifice her hair for her career and would often have to pull up her cap upwards of 20 times per training session
- Sexism
 - Norwegian women beach handball team fined 1500 Euros for improper clothing (and has been campaigning for over 15 years), team had been threatened by disqualification
 - Inappropriate clothing given the discomfort caused by sand, anger that attire was simply made to cater to male audiences without any regard for the conditions or embarrassment of the female players
 - Muslim players not even allowed to play due to the attire
 - 2012 – FIVB (International Volleyball federation) allowed for more attire than previously allowed (bikinis), allowing for more inclusive participation

Unfairness towards women – Transgenderism in Sports

- Rule dictates that testosterone levels must be below 10nm per liter for at least 12 months
- While this rule does deter people from lying about their sexuality, many have argued that it still remains unfair and impossible for women to compete → Does not counterbalance sustainable biological benefit males experience during formative years
- Male puberty gives unfair advantages in body mass, muscle mass, lung capacity and heart size → Example would be 100m Breaststroke, Adam Peaty, men’s champion, was almost 10s and 15% faster than the women’s champion, Lydia Jacoby.
- Joe Biden signed off Gender Discrimination Order on his first day as president → allows transgender women to participate in women’s sports leagues
- Laurel Hubbard → Transgender woman who was allowed to take part in Tokyo 2020 olympics, never won anything as man but able to win Gold medals at regional competitions as a woman → Displacement of Kuinini Manumua, 21 year old who missed out on first olympics (opportunities of women being denied)
- In 2018, Selina Soule was one of the top 5 sprinters in Connecticut, until male athletes who identify as female won 15 women’s high school track championships. Such issues seen to deny women scholarships and awards at school level.
- On the other hand, womens transition to men requires the use of a testosterone, a hormone that involved in the growth of men in puberty. However, this hormone is considered illegal by the World Anti-Doping Agency and can be seen to be unfair

Societal imbalance → Socioeconomic inequality in Sports

- Opportunity for people to break out of poverty cycle
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- Commercialisation of external parties in sports that seek to make sports less assessible to both players and fans
 - Rise of rich owners like Roman Abramovich and Sheikh Mansour (Russian and Saudi oil giants) → led to football clubs charging huge amounts → 15 Pounds per match in EPL during COVID-19 Lockdown
 - USA Today found that many sports, from Baseball to Basketball to Volleyball, cost upwards of a few thousand dollars annually just to play at high school club level

- [Other side?] IOC published that it would be spending over 25 Million dollars to help subsidise athletes from less-well funded countries and their olympic committees → but not enough to offset huge costs given how at the highest level, many need to train, reflect and study, and rest almost as a full time job.
- Huge costs of sports on individuals
 - Private coaching, equipment, nourishment, and living expenses with virtually no income for many years → sometimes even needing to travel overseas or entering universities for opportunities [for example Joseph Schooling and Quah Zheng Wen]
 - Many athletes have to also worry about injuries that could ruin their career and almost completely terminates their ability to breadwin → take footballer Samuel Umtiti for example, who had won 2 Spanish League titles and scored the winning goal to send France into their world cup final → less than 3 years later, labelled deadwood following a career ending knee cartilage injury
 - Two-time olympics speed-skater Eric Flaim stated that over a decade of training costs easily over a quarter of a million
 - Megan Kalmoe discovered to be living just above the poverty line, earning \$800 a month training over 36h per week, according to ESPN
 - Gymnast Gabby Douglas' mother had to file for bankruptcy several months before daughter would win the olympic gold medal
- Between countries/teams
 - Australian Olympic committee estimates that to match its medal tally at Rio, would likely have to incur \$16M per medal
 - Football Club Paris-Saint Germain spent more than \$400 million in 1 transfer window owing to its sponsorship from the Qatar Tourism Authority, a state-funded organisation

Sports as a platform for social change

- Take the Knee gesture
- Hazma Choudhury and Wesley Fofana were holding up Palestine flags during FA cup celebrations during the 2021 Israel-Palestine conflict
- LeBron James and other basketballers wore tshirts with the words 'I can't breathe',
- Mesut Ozil has used his status as a celebrity to campaign for more rights for the Ughur muslims in China, and at the expense of his footballing career raised huge awareness about their plight

AT: Often met with criticism for politics

- British home secretary Priti Patel labelled football take the knee gesture as 'gesture politics'

Mental Health in sports (Pressure)

- Naomi Osaka – suffered from depression for 3 years, had to pull out from string of events including the French Open in 2021
- Simone Biles – Suffered from family issues during olympics, had to pull out from all events at the Tokyo 2020 olympics due to mental health issues from high levels of stress, or 'the weight of the world weighing on her'
- Legendary Basketballer Michael Jordan had to take a break from NBA after the large amount of pressure and media scrutiny

Toxicity in sports

Many people have forgotten how much athletes at top level remain human and the rampant spread of social media has made toxic and hurtful comments commonplace. Such issues have become increasingly prevalent in our society due to the rise of social media and cancel culture

- Samuel Umtiti → Level of play had been much worse as a result of a career-cripling often recurring knee injury → Boomed by fans every touch of the ball for being unwilling to leave his club, something far out of his control
- Joseph Schooling, less than 4 years ago was a National Hero, winning an olympic Gold medal in record time. No sooner than a recent upset would many people jump on the bandwagon criticising him for lack of training

Hypercompetitiveness in sports

- Not just at the highest level – also occurs at students' levels. 2015 Basketball match between Hammond and Griffith high schools saw fans, coaches and even police spilling onto basketball court and leading to a brawl that lasted several minutes
- Violence in sports – Battle of Nuremburg match between Netherlands and Portugal where players were so violent it was considered almost as bad as a full-scale war during WW2
- “Cheating” in sports → loss of sportsmanship as teams do everything to win: 2010 World Cup when Uruguayan striker Luis Suarez intentionally handballed to save his team from conceding a winning goal – would later run back onto the pitch and celebrate in front of the crying Ghanaian fans and players
- Synchronised Swimming
 - o Long periods while holding breath
 - o In an NYT survey of 430 athletes, at least 1 in 4 reported having a concussion
 - o Many fearful of reporting cases, out of fear of disappointing self/teammates and being unable to participate
 - o Karenna Tjoa, competing at pan-American games, received concussion and recounted that everytime she got into water she would be dizzy and have a headache
 - o Especially true due to the high cost of opportunities
- Drug use in sports
 - o Lance Armstrong: road racing cyclist who had titles on Tour de France revoked for doping and trafficking of drugs, and was named the ringleader of “the most sophisticated, professionalised, and successful doping program sport had ever seen”
 - o Russian state-sponsored doping programme resulted in a 2-year ban of Russia from the olympics; Russian athletes having to compete under the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) and Russian anthem cannot be played
 - o Wide extent of drug and substance abuses has shown how fairness and sportsmanship in sports has been lost

Does competitive sport always contribute to greater harmony and understanding?

No – Competitive sport can result in bringing out larger controversies in our society

- Racism issues in sports (such as in 2021 Euros)
- Sexism issues in sports (such as Norwegian women's beach volleyball team)

No – Competitive sports can result in hypercompetitiveness and discourse between groups of people due to the high stakes of competitive sports

- Corruptions, doping and mental health
- Clashing of fans/players– Nice-Marseille, Luis Figo incident; Battle of Neuremburg

No – Competitive sports often results in the widening of income gaps and results in greater societal tensions.

- For every 1 player who succeeds many others don't
- Brazil's Favelas and alienation of parts of their society

Yes – Sport can unite both fans and athletes towards common goals in creating a shared history and identity

- Fans – 'West Ham syndrome', or the loyalty to teams even if they are not winning, being dubbed even as almost a religion. Yellow wall of Borussia Dortmund seen to be a group of die-hard fans willing to support their teams through anything and willing to don yellow and black for their teams
- National Identity - Schooling/Yu

Evaluation: Ideal vs Reality – while sports has the potential to contribute to greater harmony and understanding, in reality it often is unable to play out in that manner, often resulting in further divisions in society

‘As sports becomes more like a business, its ideals have been forgotten’ DYA?

Ideals of sports → Antidiscrimination, Core Ideals like friendship and mutual understanding
Sports as a business → both at more amateur levels (sports being less accessible) and at competitive level (sports being used to sap as much money as possible)

No – High amounts of funding in sports helps attract much sporting talent to it, allowing for competition at the highest level

Rebuttal – Commercialisation of sports has resulted in inflated income for many sportsmen, which has led to ideals of sport being forgotten

- Income inequality
 - o Professional athlete in major leagues on average earns about 3 million annually, more than 30 times the average household in the US
- Could demotivate people's performance
 - o Gareth Bale
 - o Albert Haynesworth of the Washington Redskins – signed a \$144 million contract, followed with his worst season ever
- Vicious Cycle of earnings
 - o When team able to offer more expensive contracts, other players demand greater sums of money, leading to an inflated wage bill and much higher costs for all players
 - o Leo Messi and Barcelona

Yes – Sports as a business has resulted in sports becoming increasingly inaccessible, discriminating against those who lack the resources to enjoy its benefits

- Inequality at the levels of individuals, teams and fans

Yes – Hypercompetitiveness of sports as a result of financial aspects of sports have resulted in ideals of sports being forgotten (because of the high cost of sports, etc.)

- Mental Health
- Drug abuse

Overall Eval – without having the financial backing of business, sports would not be able to exist at such a scale in this world, and be unable to attract fans, coaches and athletes to dedicate their lives to sports. In an ideal world, the ideals of sport would be protected, however the business aspect of sport is necessary in reality

Do you agree that only athletes who can win deserve our support?

Support – financial/sponsorship and moral support (fans/cheering)

T – Despite not being able to win, athletes who are unable to win are still able to inspire and act as a role model for many and deserve the support of fans.

- 1992 Barcelona olympics, men's 400m semifinals Derek Redmond of Great Britain tearing right hamstring during race and father ran onto the racetrack and helped the child through to finish the race

T -- Although athletes may not be able to win, they are still able unite supporters behind behind a common goal

- 2020 Tokyo Olympics Yu Mengyu and Joseph Schooling

T – Supporting athletes who do not win ensures the continuity of the sport by attracting people to dream????

AT – Athletes who cannot win may not not deserve financial support as they would be a wastage of scarce resources

Examine the view that today's sportsman is more of a celebrity than an athlete.

T - Only occurs at the highest level (especially true for individual sports)

- Megan Kalmoe discovered to be living just above the poverty line, earning \$800 a month training over 36h per week, according to ESPN
- Gymnast Gabby Douglas' mother had to file for bankruptcy several months before daughter would win the olympic gold medal

T – Many sportsmen's celebrity and fame are dependent on their athleticism and success in sports, thus their main focus at the end of the day has to be their athleticism

~~— Joseph Schooling Swimming School..?~~

~~Time and commitment?~~

~~— Ben Foster 'Cycling GK' and Antoine Griezmann Esports team~~

AT - Selection of sportsmen in today's society is often a result of more factors than merely their sporting ability, symbolising that sportsmen are often judged as a celebrity rather than an athlete.

- Mesut Ozil

Has sports become too politicised?

To what extent is sport an effective platform to build national identity?

National heroism

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