

## Ethical codes: fit for the promotion of ethics in sport?

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Sport has not been safeguarded against managerial controversies and (corporate) ethical crises. Then again, sport isn't just another business, and ethical dilemmas are often complicated by the fact that sport is about pushing limits and playing on the edge of what is possible and/or acceptable. Looking at sport from a management angle, we discuss the case for the use of ethical codes to promote ethical behavior in the business of sport.

Numerous scandals and abuses have raised the question for more ethical behavior and management in sports clubs worldwide. The ethical problems concerning sports organizations are plentiful. On the hand have, there are the issues that afflict organizations in general, for instance gender inequality. On the other hand, sports clubs also have to face ethical problems that are specific for this sector, such as match fixing, the boundaries between coaches and athletes and the use of performance enhancing drugs. A widely used instrument for tackling ethical challenges and conflicts is the installation of a code of ethics in an organization (Kaptein, 2008). Not unexpectedly, also the sports worlds is turning towards this approach, but this hasn't been studied to date.

The use and effectiveness of these ethical codes to handle ethical problems is still very heavily debated. Ethical codes

are subject to various critiques. Moreover, the results of studies on the effectiveness of ethical codes are widely divergent and even conflicting, ranging from effective and vital, to ineffective or even counterproductive. In this paper we will first present an overview of the existing studies on code effectiveness and then focus more in depth on the various circumstances in which codes are created, implemented and enforced. These variables may be decisive for whether a code is a valuable instrument to encourage more ethical behavior or not. Furthermore, attention will be given to the instruments to assess these possible determinants of effectiveness. We will discuss the most suitable method to investigate the effectiveness of ethical codes in sports. The concept of Ethical Climate (Cullen, 1993) is chosen to assist in the assessment of code effectiveness. To date, the Ethical Climate Index (Arnaud, 2006; Arnaud, 2010) has not been introduced into the sport context yet. The presentation of this instrument for use in the sports world and the prevalence of the use of codes of ethics in sports are the main and innovative focus of this paper.

### References

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