**Lost Eden: The Corruption of Sport**

**Abstract**

This chapter offers an analysis of the changing nature of corruption in sport. It is presented in three stages; the influence of gambling on amateur and professional football, the manipulation of sport as a form of state corruption and national propaganda, and increased commercialisation of sport and sporting bodies’ corruption.

**Introduction**

Fraud and corruption in sport is nothing new, the social and political context in which some frauds and acts of corruption occur, however, has changed (Brooks et al. 2013; Transparency International 2016). Whilst this chapter is presented in three sections – the ‘evils’ of gambling and its impact on football, the politicisation of sport and state sponsored doping, and the corrupt management of sporting institutions and impact of the commercialisation of sport – these should not be viewed in isolation (Masters, 2015).

In the initial section of this chapter we highlight the change in societal discourse and attitudes towards gambling and sport as it moved from a predominantly amateur to professional standing. Those with a public voice such as religious leaders often claimed that sport was going to be corrupted if athletes competed to win and/or for payment instead of spiritual and ethical ideals (Macaloon, 2007). This view is based on a notion in the West of muscular Christianity, where it was thought that men engaged in sport to augment health and built character. Amateur sportsmen were not averse to manipulating the outcome of a sporting contest for profit though, and it is perhaps possible to suggest that with the professionalisation of sport and codification of sporting rules developed by such bodies as the Football Association in England 1863 (Mason, 1980; Norridge, 2008) that the opportunity for playing for payment both as an athlete and manipulating the outcome of a match increased in relation to the number of matches played. Such manipulation, which occurred, pales into insignificance in the next section with the development of sport and rise in Fascism and Communism in Europe and the manipulation of sport as a political ideal.

Sport has been used as a political statement of power and prestige since the Olympics in ancient Greece but it is perhaps with the ‘modern’ Olympic movement and in the particular the Olympics in Berlin in 1936 were we see it used as a form of unquestionable state propaganda and racial superiority (Cronin &Mayall, 1998). This political manipulation manifested into the systematic doping of athletes in Eastern Europe after World War Two and throughout the Cold War, and has resurfaced in the Sochi Winter Olympics, Russia in 2014. Doping athletes to achieve sporting success is particularly associated with the Cold War and Eastern Europe (Dimeo, 2007) but athletes in the West were/are not completely honest as individual athletes have participated in doping with the help of a corrupt network of doctors and chemists to achieve sporting and subsequent commercial success.

In the final section of this chapter we focus on the custodians of sport, and those that should have the interests and development and management of the sport at heart. Drawing on examples of the International Olympic Committee and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), we show that sport has been manipulated for personal benefit with the increase in commercial sponsorship, and that sporting bodies have engaged in rampant bribery, vote rigging and fraud (Jennings and Sambook, 2000; Maening, 2005; Jennings, 2006, 2007; Fletcher & Herrmann, 2012, Brooks et al. 2013, Transparency International, 2016).

Before we progress a definition of what we mean by corruption is useful. Any definition, however, as noted by Philp (2015), can have two elements: it can articulate the import and use of a word, and it can act as a tool to help explain its meaning; the social sciences are primarily concerned with the latter as we are here and for the purposes of clarification we suggest it is best to see sporting corruption as part of a continuum instead of trying to describe it as some rigid defined act. In this chapter then corruption can range from non-criminal and unethical acts such as doping and breaches of codes of conduct to bribery to secure a contract to host a major sporting event, which is highly illegal and criminal.

**Amateur to Professional: A Continuation of Corruption**

Primarily played by amateurs until the twentieth century, sport was seen as a form of exercise that was considered useful for a healthy body, mind and spirit (Eitzen, 1989; Vamplew, 2004; Macaloon, 2007). It was seen as beneficial to the individual, the team and built both individual character and that of a nation. The main threat to this ideal though was thought to be the ‘evil’ and undesirable effects of gambling on sport and the character of the individual (Munting, 1997, p. 17). This dissipation of character was seen primarily as a problem associated with the working class (Chinn, 1991). A brief review of British gambling laws amply highlights views on the immorality and effects of gambling depending on the social background and class of the individual. The Gaming Act of 1845 explicitly outlawed all forms of commercialised gambling for the working classes, except at a designated horse race track. The 1853 Betting Act made it illegal to keep or use any house, office or room for the purpose of gambling. This prohibition, however, did not apply to members of a private club or even extending credit if public premises were avoided. These laws simply displaced working class gambling onto the street to such an extent that by the 1890s, there was a National Anti-Gambling League (NAGL) that put pressure on the British Parliament to remove it (gambling) from public places and focus on what is saw as protecting the poor from its feckless and incorrigible habits.

It was more than the feckless habits and the professionalisation of sport that encountered the ire of ‘concerned classes’, though. With a shift from gambling as a sin to a criminal act in the western world, gambling was referred to (and still is by some) as irrational and illogical vice (Leitzel, 2008) in an ‘age of reason’ and was in particular associated with the rise and the spectre of socialism. In the context of sport and competition views of the working class and its attitude to sport is amply illustrated by a publication of the time; a 1896 edition of *Badminton Magazine*, explained the difference between a man of class and the common man as; ‘the artisan differs from the public school man…he plays to win at all costs…his…desire to win leads him to play up to the rules and indulge in dodges…which the public school man is apt to consider dishonorable’ (Cashmore & Cleland, 2014, p. 17). This view of the ‘artisan’, endured into the twentieth century even though the English Football Association recognised professionalism as part of the sport as early as 1885, and the codification and establishment of the international organisation of football was transformed with the foundation of FIFA in 1904 in Paris and first Football World Cup in Uruguay, 1930.

Playing up to the rules in sport or ‘putting in the fix’, and a desire to win at all costs, is not a problem of its time, or an historical artifact; waging, regardless of the class the of the person was commonplace (Forrest & Simmons, 2010, 2012) as was trying to fix the result in advance for profit and/or a desire to enforce a sense of social superiority (Holt, 1989). This notion of social superiority declined with the professionalisation of sport but the manipulation of a sporting contest endured. In 1915 a match between Manchester United and Liverpool at Old Trafford was fixed; Manchester United won the match 2-0. Seven players were banned for life (later overturned for all of them but one in 1919) for gambling on and manipulating the outcome of the match. At the time of the match, Manchester United was struggling with relegation whilst Liverpool was neither in danger of relegation or playing for a trophy. Although it appears the players’ motives were financial, as the league was to be suspended at the end of the football calendar in 1915 because of the First World War, United were saved from relegation by one point, with Chelsea relegated instead. However, before 1919-20 season started the then First Division was expanded and Chelsea was elected back into the First Division (Cashmore & Cleland, 2014). Due to the gambling laws at the time the only avenues available for gambling were at a race track or illegally, and it was only rumour of a fix after the match that made the FA start an investigation and uncover this fix.

In 1915 players were bound by a contractual clause that restricted transfers between clubs, and players’ wages were linked to national wage scales which remained in place until 1961 in the United Kingdom. The low wages and temporary suspension of football in 1915 has been put forward as a reason why professional players succumbed to manipulating the match. The low wages were again cited in 1962 once it was discovered that a match between Ipswich Town and Sheffield Wednesday in the English first division had been fixed. The contractual clause, which in effect prevented players’ movement between clubs and power to negotiate wages beyond a fixed scale changed in 1961, but even with the sport awash with funds in the 1980s onwards it appears that some players sought ‘extra income’ before a brief football career ended. For example, in 1995 in England Bruce Grobbelaar, John Fashanu and Hans Segers, with Malaysian businessman, Richard Lim was accused of conspiracy to fix matches for profit. All were eventually cleared but the final judgement by the court made it clear that they considered there was evidence of dishonesty that undermined the integrity of the sport (Cashmore & Cleland, 2014).

Football players are useful to fix a match, but not always necessary as referees, club officials, owners (Hill, 2008, 2009, 2010; McNamee, 2013; Brooks et al. 2013) have all been involved. Bernard Tapie, club president of Marseille in 1993 fixed a match between Marseille and Valenciennes. This fix, which involved players and owners, helped Marseille win the French league title and later Champions League trophy in 1993. Marseille had the French league title withdrawn and were relegated as punishment for such a transgression. Tapie was fined and sentenced to two years in prison, of which he served only six months. This type of collaborative corruption is a common theme in Italian football (Foot, 2007; Di Ronco & Lavorgna, 2015) and is seen as a systemic problem (Porro & Russo, 2000) to which it appears to have no response as corruption scandals have occurred in the 1908s, 1990s and 2000s.

These types of fixes mentioned above should be viewed differently to players that fix a match for profit or that of a corrupt referee. Owners will mostly fix a match to secure points and thus league titles and/or a trophy but both players by directly manipulating the result of a match or matches and owners to win titles secure a profit as titles offer access to increased commercial sponsorship and revenue if champions of a league or major trophy.

Both FIFA and UEFA are aware of the dangers of gambling. FIFA developed an Early Warning System 2004, but did not monitor FIFA competitions till 2007, with UEFA later developing its Betting Fraud Detection System. It is estimated that there are 2,132 Internet sites in the world (not all sport sites, though) and that £350-400 billion is ‘risked’ a year on sport worldwide (Brooks et al, 2013). A problem here though is that roughly 50 percent of this is ‘black market’ gambling and therefore will not register on an early warning system. This is further compounded by the fact that gambling on football is increasingly ‘in-play’, which is gambling whilst the match is in progress (Forrest, 2012). Moreover, at present, there is no specific EU legislation on sports gambling (Hornle & Zammit, 2010); instead it is left to national legal systems to deal with what is an international problem.

The impact of gambling on amateur and professional sport should not be underestimated. The avenues available for the public to participate in gambling have increased substantially, and for many it is a form of entertainment, but with the volume of sports played world-wide, from the lowest to highest leagues manipulating a match to make a profit and/or secure points or a trophy will continue to exist. Sporting corruption, however, reaches beyond individuals and owners of football clubs to the level of the state. It is to state systemic corruption that we now turn.

**The Nation State and Sport: Corruption and Propaganda**

Sport is more than an athletic endeavor, it reaches beyond the pitch and track into politics. It is often used as a tool to promote a nation’s social and political and cultural credentials on an international stage (Allison, 2005; Cronin & Mayall, 1998) and has provided legitimacy to military regimes and dictatorships. Nowhere is this sporting corruption more evident than the systemic use of doping elite national athletes (Rosen, 2008). Before we illustrate the reach of systemic state corruption in sport and in particular athletic events such as the summer and winter Olympic Games some background on the politicization of the Olympics is useful.

The 1896 Olympics in Athens are seen as the start of modern Olympic movement as they were the first under the supervision and regulation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) established two years earlier in 1894. The IOC ideals of sporting endeavour and excellence, however, were quickly supplanted with political ideals as early as 1936 in the Berlin ‘Nazi’ Games. Sporting ideals are always promoted as part of the Olympics but often marginalised in a political dispute to emphasize national and political interests. For example, in 1948 Germany and Japan were suspended from the Olympics because of their role in World War Two, in 1956 some nations refused to participate after Israel, United Kingdom and France invaded Egypt after it nationalised the Suez canal, and the Soviet Union invaded Hungary, in 1972 there was the ‘Munich massacre’, in 1980 the United States of America boycotted the Summer Olympics in Moscow primarily because the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and in 1984 the Soviet Union boycotted the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. These examples are major political disputes rather than all disputes that have surfaced regarding the Olympics, but with the restoration of the Olympics after the Second World War a cold war became inextricably linked to political systems – capitalist and communist – and state propaganda. To secure national prestige some engaged in systemic doping of elite athletes. This became apparent in the late 1960s and early 1970s that saw the development of state sponsored corruption, particularly associated with the German Democratic Republic (then East Germany) which had an official state plan that administered anabolic steroids to its elite athletes as it sought to promote socialism and its ideals on an international stage.

State sponsored sporting corruption can achieve two aims; it can raise its own international profile as a nation of sporting success, and uphold its political system and control of its own citizens with a rise in nationalistic fervour. But it is perhaps the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and numbers of individual ‘western’ athletes caught doping that pushed the IOC to adopt an anti-doing code. From a World Conference on Doping in Sport in 1999 established by the IOC, World Anti-Doping Association (WADA) was founded with a World Anti-Doping Code (the Code) launched on 5 March, 2003. Whilst a number of sporting organisations signed the Code, it is not legally binding. Therefore, state run bodies could only offer a moral commitment to the code (WADA, 2003). A further convention was adopted on 19 October, 2005 (but was not active till 1 February, 2007) and established a prohibited list of substances and also allowances for athletes to use medication if a medical condition was declared. These conditions are known as therapeutic use exemptions (Marriott-Lloyd, 2010) but there is some doubt that exemptions, whilst known by WADA, are also used to boost athletic performance.

Doping is not a problem only associated only with the Olympics (Paoli, 2012; Paoli & Donati, 2014; Antonopoulos, 2015); whilst BALCO in 2003 is associated with Olympic athletes there are numerous cases of sports men and women ingesting banned substances involving levels of sophistication and organisation such as Festina in 1998 (Lentillon‐Kaestner et al. 2012) and Operation Puerto in 2004-2006 (Soule & Lestrelin, 2011). The WADA Convention expects all athletes, regardless of the sport, to be subjected to the same level of supervision but this can depend on the sport, and also the country and its attitude towards use of banned substances. The problem with national sporting bodies and nations, if under substantial state control/interference, is that some athletes have washed the substances out of their system or provided a false test well in advance of competition. In the case of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) athletes could use the clean urine/blood of another athlete for a doping test, tamper with the test and results, threaten and intimidate or bribe officials, or were simply withdrawn behind the ‘iron curtain’ if suspected of doping, only to return at a later date to compete. This promotion of national ideals and political and social systems continue; a current example is the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014, which set about promoting Russia as a country of sporting and cultural excellence. It appears from a commissioned WADA investigation that doping of athletes was planned from 2011, continued to the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, and that Russia's sports ministry directed, controlled and oversaw the manipulation of urine samples provided by its athletes. Sporting bodies/state organisations are required/should withhold financial support to athletes and prevent access to sporting facilities upon banned (rather than conviction) of an anti-doping rule violation for the length of their ban. Whilst this is WADA policy in practice state run sporting bodies circumvent such proposals, and continue to assist elite athletes out of competition.

The example of the GDR in the 1960 and 1970s and Russia in 2014 has illustrated that doping in the Olympics is used to enhance a nations national sporting and cultural status. The systemic doping of athletes is part of the politicization of sport, and in particular major world events. Sport is a tool for propaganda – a war of social and political ideals without death – and doping is one of the weapons in a nations’ armoury. This is only part of the problem as for individuals in the ‘west’ doping is more of an individual endeavour where athletes, with the help of a medical team have also tested positive for banned substances in their systems. For example, Marion Jones, Dwayne Chambers, Ben Johnson, Justin Gatlin are a few of the more well know athletes. Doping then is committed by both states to champion its country and sporting and cultural excellence. Whilst this latter category of cheating appears to use doping as a personal tool to increase the chances of athletic success and future wealth rather than some political ideal. It is to this lust for wealth and impact of the commercialisation of sport we considered in the final part of this chapter.

**Commercialisation of Sport**

Sport plays acollective social, political and cultural role of which commercial interests are a recent development. The increase in individual and sporting events sponsorship, however, has also become what many during the period of amateur athletics feared; that is professionalism and payment for sport leads to corruption of mind, body and spirit. Whilst there are numerous examples of individual athletes that have ‘cheated’ to secure an advantage in a sporting contest – this section will focus more on the sporting bodies that embraced the commercialisation of their sport, but succumb to acts of corruption and abused the position(s) held for personal benefit rather than the development of the sport. We highlight two sports in particular; these are FIFA and the Olympic movement.

FIFA has encountered major criticism and ongoing accusations of corruption since Joao Havelange became its president in 1974 (Chade, 2016). There is too much to document here on the numerous corruption scandals that have engulfed FIFA (see Jennings, 2006; Pielke, 2013), but it was the aspiration of Havelange and his relationship with Horst Dassler who then owned Adidas to release the then untapped commercial revenue and sponsorship for international football. An expansion of tournament spaces in the Football World Cup meant that football went beyond what was until the 1970s a euro-centric competition and embraced Africa, and South America beyond Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay and thus attracted a global audience (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009). This captive audience, in stadiums and on television appealed to multinationals around the world. The audience for one match, depending on the teams involved, reached millions of people and so multinationals were keen to sponsor major sporting events. This influx of commercial revenue though corrupted some officials, particularly those on the executive committee of FIFA. As early as the 1970s, Havelange and executive committee members (Chade, 2016) were accused of an array of criminal acts.

Years later little appears to have changed as a contemporary example of FIFA corruption was the decision to award the football World Cup to Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022. In 2010, Amos Adamu was banned by FiFA for three years for requesting bribes in exchange for his vote to hold the Football World Cup in 2014 and 2018. In 2011, Lord Triesman, then Chair of then England World Cup bid claimed in evidence to a United Kingdom Government Select Committee for Department of Culture, Media and Sport that six members of FIFA’s executive committee had engaged in ‘unethical conduct’ to secure payment for votes to hold the two forthcoming World Cups. This allegation, while vigorously denied at the time, has become evident with Mohammed Bin Hammam the FIFA representative from Qatar banned in 2011 and subsequent investigation by the USA Department of Justice,which has uncovered rampant corruption in FIFA (Brooks, 2014; Zimbalist, 2016) in 2015. Many of those that held executive positions enriched themselves at the expense of the sport. They also made demands on any potential host nation that wanted to hold a World Cup that tax breaks, free hotel rooms, and that visa restrictions be lifted for some of its members. Whilst this is in contravention of United Kingdom and European Union laws the England World Cup bid team acquiesced to all of FIFA’s demands (Transparency International, 2016). The desire to hold a Football World Cup, both as an opportunity to attract business and commercial revenue but also prestige and national pride of holding such an event appears to be a systemic problem. The impact of commercial revenue (Sewart, 1987) and prestige of holding a major sporting event such as the Olympics is no different.

The 1996 Atlanta Olympics represented a qualitative change in the involvement of commercial interests in the Olympics, with an unprecedented degree of corporation involvement that was thought to have increased the potential for corruption (Crowther, 2002). The reach of commercial interests became obvious, however, with the scandal at the Salt Lake Winter Games in 2002. Salt Lake had won the bid to host the Winter Games in 1995. A USA Department of Justice investigation later discovered that the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC) bribed IOC officials to hold the 1998 winter and 2000 summer Olympics. While the IOC has changed it methods of voting and potential for bribery to counteract future scandals the process of awarding a major athletic event, summer or winter Olympics (Simson & Jennings, 1992) and Commonwealth Games are still often accused of some egregious corruption. It is possible that due to the vast sums of money involved in bidding, building infrastructure and sponsorship of such major world events corruption is inevitable. For example, the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, India is accused of a range of legal and ethical violations such as procurement fraud, inflated bills for services and construction, laundered funds in offshore accounts, child labour, and bribery of officials (Mishra, 2016). These types of corrupt acts echoed in the Sochi Winter Olympic Games in Russia in 2014 where contracts for infrastructure projects were awarded based on personal contacts rather than open competition (Golubchlikov, 2016) along with the systemic doping of Russian athletes.

Regardless of the level corruption, the Olympic movement and FIFA still attract substantial commercial revenue. Apart for a brief and temporary threat to FIFA in 2015 that it could lose its sponsorship from some multinationals unless it reformed itself, it can and will always attract sponsorship. If one company were to withdraw its sponsorship others willingly pay FIFA and the IOC sponsorship deals to access millions of potential customers. No company wants to be associated with corruption and ruin its brand name (Mazanov & Connor, 2010) but there is a difference in the way individual athletes are treated where sponsorship is withdrawn quickly if seen as corrupt and major events that have a world audience to which a service or product is sold. A star athlete can be replaced by another star athlete, but major events are rare and commercial interests appear to determine that ‘working’ with a corrupt sporting body, a dictatorship and a country with Human Rights abuses is acceptable if promoting a service or product. The corruption of sport via gambling, doping, and commercial revenue then appears complete (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2006); all are now a threat to sport in different ways but all have put us further from Eden that perhaps we thought possible.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter we have shown that gambling is a potential threat to the integrity of sport and that that athletes are ingesting and injecting banned substances as part of state sponsored systemic programme or for personal individual advantage in a sporting contest, and subsequent riches that come from athletic success. Furthermore, we have illustrated that those tasked with managing and developing sports are often corrupt and seek personal profit at the expense of the sport. These ‘threats’ complete a triptych of dangers that sport must contend with now. Rather than lost, Eden was an ideal, and one that was always unobtainable in the world of sport as amateur athletes, nation-states, professional athletes and sporting bodies have all succumbed to the temptations of forbidden corrupt sporting fruits.

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