

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

## 5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### ETHICS, BIOETHICS AND SPORT

MAY 6TH - 7TH 2026

ZAGREB, CROATIA



Sveučilište u Zagrebu  
Fakultet hrvatskih studija

5th International Conference  
**ETHICS, BIOETHICS AND SPORT**



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Zagreb, May 6 – 7, 2026

Library Hall of the Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb  
Borongajska cesta 83d, Zagreb

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**PROGRAMME OF THE  
5th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
*ETHICS, BIOETHICS AND SPORT***

## **WEDNESDAY, May 6, 2026**

*Library Hall, Faculty of Croatian Studies  
(Borongajska cesta 83d, Zagreb)*

9:15–9:30 *Opening ceremony*

- MATIJA MATO ŠKERBIĆ, President of the Organisation Committee of the Conference
- DARIO VUČENOVIĆ, Dean of the Faculty of Croatian Studies

9:30–10:30 *Plenary lecture and discussion*

- JAVIER FRANCISCO LOPEZ FRIAS (Utah State University, USA)  
**“Playing with Fire without Getting Burned? Effort, Self-Imposed Challenges, and the Emotional Structure of Sport”**

10:30–10:45 *Coffee break*

10:45–11:45 *Lectures and discussions*

- ANA MASKALAN (Institute for Social Research, Croatia)  
**“Strong, but Not Too Strong: The Bioethical Politics of Women’s Bodybuilding”**
- CHRISTOPHER C. YORKE (University of Zagreb, Croatia)  
**“Sport Ethics in Nearby and Distant Possible Worlds”**

11:45–12:00 *Coffee break*

12:00–13:00 *Lectures and discussions*

- BORYANA ANGELOVA-IGOVA (National Sports Academy “Vasil Levski”, Bulgaria)  
**“Inclusion through Sports of Minority Groups in Youth Centers in Bulgaria”**
- IVANA ZAGORAC (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia)  
**“From Categorization to Context: Rethinking Vulnerability in Sport and Beyond”**

13:00-14:30 *Lunch break*

14:30-15:30 *Lectures and discussions*

- MATIJA MATO ŠKERBIĆ (Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)  
**“From Periphery to Paradigm: Europe’s Role in Reshaping the Philosophy of Sport”**
- IGOR ETEROVIĆ (Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka, Croatia) & JAN DEFRANČESKI (University of Zagreb Centre for Integrative Bioethics, Croatia)  
**“From Nature Sport to Bioethical Worldview: The Story of Arne Næss”**

15:30–15:45 *Coffee break*

15:45–16:45 *Lectures and discussions – Students Session*

- LANA DAJČER & MATIJA MATO ŠKERBIĆ (Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia)  
**“An Ethical Approach to Equestrian Sport and Competition”**
- IVAN LUDWIG RADIĆ & IVANA GREGURIC (Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia)  
**“Ethical Challenges in Modern Sport: Between Performance and Integrity”**

16:45–17:00 *Coffee break*

17:00–18:00 *Plenary lecture and discussion*

- MILOŠ MARKOVIĆ (University of Belgrade, Serbia)  
**“In the Shadow of Elite Sport – (Bio)Ethical Challenges in Gymnastics Disciplines”**

20:00 – 22:00 *Dinner at the restaurant ‘Stari Kotač 2’*



## **THURSDAY, May 7, 2026**

*Library Hall, Faculty of Croatian Studies  
(Borongajska cesta 83d, Zagreb)*

10:00–11:00 Keynote lecture

- EMILY RYALL (University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom)  
**“Coaching Dangerous Sports: Risk, Autonomy and Athlete Regret”**

11:00–11:15 *Coffee break*

11:15–12:15 *Lectures and discussions*

- PETRA KORAC (Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia)  
**“The Influence of Physiological Changes on the Sports Success of Transgender Athletes”**
- JIM PARRY et. al. (Charles University Prague, Czech Republic)  
**“Robot Sport”**

12:15- 12:30 *Coffee break*

12:30–13:30 *Lectures and discussions*

- SUNČICA BARTOLUCI (Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Zagreb, Croatia)  
**“Ambivalence of Strength: Women, Gender and Power in Combat Sports”**
- MIROSLAV IMBRIŠEVIĆ (Open University, United Kingdom)  
**“The Ethics of Sex Verification”**

13:30-15:00 *Lunch break*

15:00–16:00 *Lectures and discussions*

- MARCUS CAMPOS (São Paulo State University, Brazil)  
**“Should Healthcare Providers in Sport Prescribe Placebos?”**

- NENAD DIKIĆ & MARIJA ANDJELKOVIĆ (Singidinum University, Serbia)  
**“Total Responsibility, Minimal Rights: An Ethical Critique of the Contemporary Athlete’s Position”**

16:00-16:15 *Coffee break*

16:15-17:15 *Plenary lecture*

- ALBERTO CARRIO (Pompeu Fabra University, Spain)  
**“Scales of Humanity: Artificial Intelligence, Neurotechnology, and What Remains Human in Sport”**

17:15-17:30 *Closing Ceremony*

## **PAPER ABSTRACTS**

Boryana Angelova-Igova

National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski", Bulgaria

***Inclusion through Sports of Minority Groups in Youth Centers in Bulgaria***

Youth centers in Bulgaria function as a "public sphere" in the sense of Jürgen Habermas—spaces for rational discourse where social status yields to the power of the better argument. Through the lens of the philosophy of sport, these centers become arenas of the "agonal" spirit, where rules are universal and impartial.

For minority groups, sport within these centers serves as a tool for communicative action. It overcomes language barriers and prejudices through a shared ethic of "fair play." Here, physical activity is not merely competition but a form of social recognition. Thus, these centers create conditions for solidarity, transforming isolation into active civic participation through the universal language of movement.

Sunčica Bartoluci

University of Zagreb, Croatia

### ***Ambivalence of Strength: Women, Gender and Power in Combat Sports***

Drawing on the concept of hegemonic masculinity, this research examines the ambivalent position of women in traditionally male-dominated combat sports, specifically wrestling and judo. Based on qualitative data from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Croatian elite and former athletes (N=19), the study explores how female athletes experience, negotiate, and embody gender within hierarchically structured sporting environments.

The findings reveal a fundamental paradox: women in combat sports simultaneously challenge and reproduce the gender order. On the one hand, through their physical competence, discipline, and sporting achievements, they destabilize biological essentialism and dominant assumptions about male bodily superiority. Their presence redefines strength, aggression, and competitiveness as socially produced and cultivated capacities rather than inherently masculine traits. On the other hand, their inclusion in these spaces often requires adaptation to hegemonic norms, including the strategic performance of femininity, heteronormative self-presentation, and the acceptance of male-centered standards of success.

The analysis further shows how everyday practice, such as impression management, justification of strong athletic bodies, and engagement with media-driven sexualization, operate as mechanisms through which gender hierarchies are subtly reproduced. At the same time, athletes' embodied practices and forms of "performative defiance" represent modes of resistance that gradually reshape the boundaries of what is considered legitimate for women in sport.

From a philosophical perspective, the research critically interrogates the dominant ethos of combat sports, exposing its grounding in historically contingent and ethically problematic gender conventions. Sport is thus conceptualized as an ambivalent social field in which gender is continuously produced, negotiated, and contested.

Overall, the study contributes to the philosophy of sport by emphasizing the need to critically reassess entrenched norms and to recognize female athletes as active agents of both continuity and transformation within gendered sporting structures.

Marcus Campos

University of Campinas, Brazil

***Should Healthcare Providers in Sport Prescribe Placebos?***

This paper examines whether sport healthcare providers should prescribe placebos by analysing the ethical, clinical, and regulatory challenges that arise when placebo use is transposed from general medicine into sports medicine. Ethical debates surrounding deceptive placebos are explored through the lenses of principlism, especially the principles of autonomy, beneficence, and non-maleficence. The paper further argues that sports medicine introduces additional complexities due to anti-doping regulations and the auxiliary obligations of clinicians. Finally, the authors adapt the Expert Consensus on placebo studies to the sports context, proposing sport specific "dos and don'ts" to guide ethical practice and concluding that integrating placebo mechanisms into sports medicine requires careful alignment with both medical ethics and anti-doping obligations.

Alberto Carrio Sampedro

Pompeu Fabra University, Spain

***Scales of Humanity: Artificial Intelligence, Neurotechnology, and What Remains Human in Sport***

A foundational assumption in the philosophy of sport is that sport is an essentially human activity (Suits, 2005; Kretchmar, 2005; Parry, 2018; Devine, 2022; Mares and Novotny, 2022). As Parry (2018) argues, the first logical condition for the correct application of the concept of 'sport' is that it refers to human activities — a claim reflected, implicitly or explicitly, across all major theories of sport. This paper argues that the accelerating technologization of sport, and the integration of AI-driven systems in particular, places this foundational assumption under critical pressure and demands its systematic revision.

The argument proceeds in three stages. First, I examine paradigmatic instances in which advanced technology is displacing human agency in central sporting functions, including officiating and coaching, and consider what these displacements entail for the conceptual integrity of sport. Second, I analyse AI-driven neurotechnologies — including brain-computer interfaces, transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS), and neuro-enhancing wearables — focusing on the philosophical problems they raise regarding the displacement of human agency in athletic decision-making and the attribution of authorship in performance. Third, I develop the concept of *scales of humanity in sport* — a framework for mapping the variable and graduated presence of the human element across sporting practices — to show that 'human activity' cannot function as a binary condition for sport but must be understood as a scalar and revisable one. The paper concludes that the philosophy of sport requires a more dynamic and technologically sensitive account of what it means for sport to remain human.

Lana Dajčer & Matija Mato Škerbić

University of Zagreb, Croatia

### *An Ethical Approach to Equestrian Sport and Competition*

Olympic equestrian sport raises important philosophical and ethical questions about animal use, fairness, and the broader role of sport in society. Supporters emphasize its historical significance and the unique bond between humans and horses, built on trust, respect, and cooperation. They argue that modern equestrian practices prioritize horse welfare through careful training, management, and veterinary care. Riders and trainers are seen as key figures who cultivate discipline, responsibility, and respect for animals—values essential for success in competition.

However, critics highlight serious ethical concerns. Horses may face physical strain and psychological stress due to intense training and competition conditions. In some cases, the pursuit of medals and financial rewards can lead to coercive practices that compromise animal welfare and violate principles of fair play. These issues challenge the moral foundations of equestrian sport.

From the perspective of the philosophy of sport, core values such as respect, fairness, equality, and responsibility must apply to all participants—including animals. Fair play should therefore include a commitment to protecting the physical and psychological well-being of horses, not just ensuring equal conditions for human competitors. This creates a need to rethink equestrian sport in a way that balances competitive ambition with ethical responsibility.

To achieve a more ethically acceptable model, several measures are necessary. First, clear and comprehensive ethical guidelines for training and competition should be established to safeguard horse welfare. Second, competition conditions must be strictly regulated to ensure transparency and limit excessive commercial pressures. Third, athletes and trainers should receive education on animal welfare and ethical responsibility. Fourth, effective monitoring systems are needed to detect and prevent abuse. Finally, assessing athletes' motivations and empathy could help reinforce ethical conduct.

Together, these steps would help preserve the integrity of equestrian sport while ensuring that fundamental ethical values are respected.

Jan Defrančeski & Igor Eterović

University of Zagreb, Croatia & University of Rijeka, Croatia

*From Nature Sport to Bioethical Worldview: The Story of Arne Næss*

In the philosophy of sport, increasing attention has recently been given to reflection on the philosophy of nature sports. The reason for this lies in their specific structure as sporting practices, but also in their complexity as an activity that is often more than just a sport. Moreover, nature sports – for individuals who actively engage in them – most often become lifestyles first, and then life philosophies, or specific worldviews. The particular value of the philosophy of nature sports lies in the domain of specific environmental or ecological awareness, or bioethical sensibility in a broader sense. In this presentation, using the example of the Norwegian philosopher and ecological thinker Arne Næss, we will demonstrate how practicing nature sports (in this case: mountaineering) very easily leads to a separate lifestyle and a distinct worldview. Moreover, we argue in favour of the thesis that it was Næss's connection with the mountains and mountaineering that led to what he calls an “ecosophical lifestyle”, or to his founding of “ecosophy” as a completely new (bioethical) worldview. This is precisely the reason why Næss's basic theses cannot be fully theoretically grasped – given their “immersion” in bare practice. On the other hand, this case demonstrates the exceptional potential that the philosophy of sport offers for reflecting on nature sports as possible platforms for changing a person's relationship to themselves and to the world in which they live.

Nenad Dukuić & Marija Andjelković

Singidinum University, Serbia

***Total Responsibility, Minimal Rights: An Ethical Critique of the Contemporary Athlete's Position***

Although athletes are presented as the central actors of modern sport, they often remain among its least protected participants. This paper argues that contemporary sport creates a serious ethical imbalance: athletes carry extensive obligations, but are granted only limited rights in return.

This imbalance appears in at least three areas. First, athletes face restrictions on political and moral expression, despite the fact that sport is never fully detached from social conflict. From the punishment of Tommie Smith and John Carlos in 1968 to recent Olympic controversies over symbolic expression, athlete speech is often treated as illegitimate when it challenges institutional neutrality. Second, athletes are frequently prevented from fully benefiting economically from the value they create, as shown by criticism of Olympic sponsorship restrictions and campaigns such as #WeDemandChange. Third, anti-doping frameworks may expose athletes to sanctions even when prohibited substances derive from contamination rather than intention, as illustrated by the Iga Świątek case.

The paper concludes that a just sports system must move beyond demanding obedience from athletes and begin offering stronger protection of their freedom, livelihood, and procedural fairness.

Miroslav Imbrišević

Allen Hall Seminary & Open University, United Kingdom

### *The Ethics of Sex Verification*

The IOC recently announced that athletes who benefit from male physiological advantage will no longer be permitted to compete in the female category. Predictably, this has led to some push-back from those who believe that inclusion is the highest good in sport – rather than fairness (or safety). I will discuss some concepts that are central in this debate.

1. What does inclusion require? The idea that everyone should be ‘included’ is a mistake, thoughtlessly reproduced by many. This holds in the private sphere, as well as in the institutional settings of the public sphere. A central purpose of social institutions is to allocate benefits and burdens (equitably) among the members of society. The logic of institutions requires that they apply eligibility criteria and, consequently, some individuals are included and some are excluded.

2. What is the role of equality and non-discrimination in this context? Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2002, V.3. 1131a10–b15), tells us that like cases should be treated alike and unlike cases differently. The new IOC policy (closely following World Athletics) is designed to establish what are like cases (women) and what are unlike cases (trans women and athletes with male DSDs) in sport. Women should be treated the same, but TW and athletes with male DSDs (except CAIS) should not be treated the same as women – because they are not biological women and do benefit from male physiological advantage. This means that we may make a distinction (i.e. discriminate in the positive sense) between these groups of athletes. And this is the aim of the new IOC policy.

Petra Korać

University of Zagreb, Croatia

*The Influence of Physiological Changes on the Sports Success of Transgender Athletes*

Although the prevalence of transgender people in the world is growing, gender transition remains a huge issue in sports, but also in public. The focus of ethical issues in sport is on transgender women, women born as men, since the hormone therapy that is necessary for the transition process affects biological characteristics, and therefore reflects on results in sports, especially sports based on muscle mass and strength. However, gender transition and associated therapy (that is necessary for the transition) are not unambiguous. In addition to the physiology of the body, hormone therapy also affects mental health, and the consequences of the therapy for the characteristics important in sports vary depending on the age of transition, and many other biological characteristics. This talk aims to discuss the physiological and mental changes that are a consequence of therapy in transgender athletes in order to more clearly understand the physical capabilities of athletes such as those whose careers have been in question in the last few years due to changes in the rules for various sports competitions, e.g. CeCé Telfer, Veronica Ivy, Hanna Mouncey and Laurel Hubbard, but also those less well-known, and the Tokyo gold medalist Quinn.

Francisco Javier López Frías

Utah State University, United States

*Playing with Fire without Getting Burned? Effort, Self-Imposed Challenges, and the Emotional Structure of Sport*

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously argued that sport is like playing with fire without getting burned: it draws individuals to the edge of their emotions, achieving emotional experiences that rarely surface elsewhere, in a relatively safe environment. Sport thus ranks among the social practices in which emotions are most vividly expressed, mobilized, and cultivated. Yet, the philosophy of sport has largely neglected them. In this presentation, I examine the nature of that neglect and why it persists, seeking to identify a path forward for a more emotionally attentive philosophy of sport. I begin by critiquing broad internalism, the dominant philosophical paradigm in sport. Although broad internalists have advanced important accounts of excellence and competitive fairness, they have largely overlooked emotions, especially their role in motivating sport participation. Moreover, when sport philosophers operating outside (or in the margins of) the broad internalist framework have examined sport-specific emotions—as in the work of Steffen Borge, Mike McNamee, and Yunus Tuncel—their focus has remained almost exclusively on competitive settings, leaving a wide range of emotions unexamined. To recover these neglected emotional dimensions, I draw on two resources. First, I revisit Bernard Suits' account of gameplay, showing that beneath his well-known analysis of gameplay as a voluntary effort to overcome unnecessary obstacles lies a rich emotional substructure: boredom as the impulse toward play, enjoyment as the reward of exercising capacities, and, most fundamentally, the satisfaction of expressing human autonomy through self-imposed challenges. Second, and crucially, I draw on empirical studies of emotion—particularly Jaak Panksepp's affective neuroscience and Robert Vallerand's psychology of passion. Focusing on the neuroscience and psychology of affect helps sport philosophy better explain the connection between the nature of sport and humans' emotional life. I conclude by highlighting that sport also has negative emotional aspects. It includes serious emotional pathologies, such as repression and excess, stemming from cultural pressures that turn play (and kindred activities like games and sport) into a tool and subordinate it to work-like demands. These aspects must also be considered when exploring, in McNamee's terms, the ethico-emotional ecologies of sport.

Miloš Marković

University of Belgrade, Serbia

***In the Shadow of Elite Sport – (Bio)Ethical Challenges in Gymnastics Disciplines***

This article analyses gymnastics disciplines as a specific context of elite sport in which early specialization, intensive training, and aesthetic demands give rise to a range of serious bioethical issues. The authors first describe the structural characteristics of gymnastics and relate them to the emergence of five groups of problems: eating disorders; hormonal imbalance and excessive physical strain; the female athlete triad (including amenorrhea); frequent and severe injuries; psychological burdens (fear, stress, abuse); as well as sociological difficulties such as social isolation and challenging career transitions after retirement.

Based on recent empirical studies, the paper highlights the high prevalence of eating disorders, menstrual disturbances, and chronic pain, as well as the normalization of pain, risky training regimes, and a culture of silence. Particular attention is devoted to the coach–athlete relationship in the case of young female athletes, various forms of psychological and physical abuse, and the resulting undermining of dignity and integrity in sport.

In the normative part of the paper, the authors employ formalism, conventionalism, and internalism to demonstrate that the described practices are not merely medical or organizational issues, but rather represent a profound erosion of the intrinsic values of sport. The role of the Gymnastics Integrity Unit (GIU) and the concept of good governance are also analyzed as institutional responses to these challenges. In conclusion, the authors advocate for an interdisciplinary bioethical framework and translational ethics as a necessary foundation for redefining practices in gymnastics, alongside the development of concrete preventive and supportive mechanisms.

Ana Maskalan

Institute for Social Research, Croatia

***Strong, but Not Too Strong: The Bioethical Politics of Women's Bodybuilding***

Women's bodybuilding has long occupied an uneasy position within contemporary sport. Once considered the most direct expression of female muscularity and strength, it has gradually been marginalized or replaced by categories that emphasize more traditionally acceptable ideals of femininity. This development raises a number of ethical questions about how women's athletic bodies are evaluated, regulated, and shaped by sporting institutions and broader cultural expectations.

This presentation explores women's bodybuilding from a bioethical and feminist perspective. It argues, first, that the decline and marginalization of women's bodybuilding reflects attempts to regulate female muscularity according to socially acceptable standards of femininity. Second, it examines the tension between athlete autonomy and paternalistic forms of regulation, often justified through concerns about health, aesthetics, or marketability. Third, it considers the feminist paradox of women's bodybuilding: while the sport can challenge dominant gender norms and function as a form of empowerment, it is simultaneously subject to pressures that reshape female athletic bodies toward more conventional ideals. Together, these points position women's bodybuilding as a useful case for examining how bioethical concerns and feminist critiques intersect in sport, particularly in debates about autonomy, risk, and the boundaries of acceptable female physicality.

### ***Robot Sport***

Since the term 'robot' was coined by Karel Čapek, a Czech dramatist, in his science fiction play *R.U.R.* (1921), the robot has evolved from a fictional projection into a technological reality. Reflection on the relation between robots and human beings naturally extends to sport, and it is now ten years since López Frías & Perez Trivino (2016) asked the question: “Will robots ever play sports?” They saw that, as a distinctively human practice, sport offers a revealing context for examining how robots may enter domains historically defined by human agency, embodiment, and competition. Their answer, then, is “No”.

However, we think that things have moved on in the last ten years, and that should be reflected in our conceptualisations. We begin with definitions, to clarify the concept of the robot. We identify several categories of Robot Sports, since they are not internally homogeneous. They vary by control mode, opponent type, rule source, and event aim. We identify:

- Human-Controlled Robot Sports (HCRS); such as the game ‘Robot Wars’.
- Shared-Control Robot Sports (SCRS); such as para-assistive robot sports.
- Autonomous Robot Sports (ARS); such as joint-agency robots playing football.

We think that if robots can play football ‘autonomously’, then they are playing what we might call ‘Robot Sport’. López Frías & Perez Trivino might be right and wrong. They are right in saying that robots (cp. animals) cannot play human sport. Their argument, based on a modified Turing-test, relies on a demonstration that robots (animals) are not humans. So this argument is not about sport, but about the relative capacities of humans and robots (animals).

But they are wrong if they are suggesting that robots cannot play robot-sport (or that animals cannot play animal-sport) - and this *is* an argument about ‘sport’. A definition of ‘sport’ will be vulnerable to *ad hoc* reinterpretations in a way that serves one’s preferred justificatory account of ‘sport’. That is to say, it remains vulnerable to what HLA Hart (1968, p6, drawing on Flew 1954, *passim*) called ‘definitional stop’.

Ivan Ludwig Radić and Ivana Greguric

University of Zagreb, Croatia

***Ethical Challenges in Modern Sport: Between Performance and Integrity***

Modern sport has encountered multiple ethical challenges which are based on staggering pressure to produce excellent results, commercialization, and technological advances. The purpose of this article is to analyse key bioethical questions in sports, such as the usage of doping, genetic modifications, and the influence of new technologies on fair play in competition. Special attention will be dedicated to the relationship between athletes, coaches and institutions, with regard to the effects of responsibility and perseverance on the integrity of sports. Methodologically, the article is based on analysing relevant literature while having a comparative approach towards different ethical theories. The results show a need for more precise normative frames and strengthening education about ethical standards in sports. To conclude, the article puts emphasis on the importance of maintaining a balance between the aspiration for excellence in sports and the perseverance of basic sport values such as fairness, equality and the respect of human dignity.

Emily Ryall  
University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

***Coaching Dangerous Sports: Risk, Autonomy and Athlete Regret***

This presentation will examine the ethical responsibilities of coaches in dangerous sports, focusing on the question of how far coaches should allow athletes to expose themselves to risk. It begins from the view that risk is not merely an unfortunate by-product of sport, but can be central to self-affirmation, embodied achievement, and the experience of a meaningful life. At the same time, it recognizes that sporting risk may involve serious and sometimes delayed harms, especially where athletes may later regret decisions made under the influence of competitive culture, group pressure, or limited understanding of long-term consequences.

Drawing on libertarian ideas associated with John Stuart Mill, I consider the case for leaving risky decisions to autonomous adults, but also show why pure non-intervention is inadequate when power imbalances, future regret, and hidden injury risks are taken seriously.

Through a series of practical examples, I will explore how coaches should respond when athletes appear willing to take risks that they may not be able to judge well. I conclude that coaches should neither eliminate all risk nor simply defer to athlete choice in all cases. Instead, they should seek to create the safest possible environment compatible with the sport, support informed decision-making, and, where necessary, refuse to facilitate actions that expose athletes to unjustifiable harm.

Matija Mato Škerbić

University of Zagreb, Croatia

***From Periphery to Paradigm: Europe's Role in Reshaping the Philosophy of Sport***

This paper offers a critical re-examination of the philosophy of sport through a distinctly European lens, arguing that the discipline stands to benefit from methodological and conceptual resources that have remained peripheral within mainstream Anglophone discourse. I begin by tracing the historical development of the European Association for the Philosophy of Sport (EAPS) alongside the often-overlooked contributions of European philosophers to the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport (IAPS) since its founding in 1972. This historical overview is complemented by a comprehensive assessment of the current state of sport philosophy across European academic institutions.

The central claim of this paper is that the philosophy of sport requires a genuinely European philosophical sensibility—one that cannot be reduced to either the dominant Analytical tradition or the so-called Continental approach, but instead draws productively from the pluralism of European philosophical heritages. Finally, I articulate a concrete roadmap for strengthening both EAPS and the broader field of sport philosophy in Europe. This vision includes five strategic priorities: (1) encouraging scholarly publication and research in national languages alongside (2) systematic translation efforts to and from English; (3) establishing annual EAPS awards to elevate European scholarship and the values embedded within it; (4) fostering targeted development in underrepresented regions including Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Eastern Europe; and (5) building new collaborative networks within and beyond Europe. Through these initiatives, European sport philosophy can achieve greater global impact while remaining faithful to its distinctive intellectual traditions.

Christopher C. Yorke

University of Zagreb, Croatia

### **Sport Ethics in Nearby and Distant Possible Worlds**

There is a nearby possible world wherein the act of eating spinach has demonstrably immediate and fantastic powers of enhancement on human physiology with no ill effects on health (call this ‘Popeye’), and a distant possible world wherein aliens from a planet called Krypton who come to Earth find that the rays of the yellow sun give them relatively tremendous powers of strength, speed, and regeneration (call this ‘Superman’). Both Popeye and Superman describe worlds wherein objections to enhancement based on harm are written out of the scenarios, and where the enhancing substances have no negative social stigma attached to them: indeed, consumption of spinach and exposure to sunlight are typically considered part of a healthy lifestyle. The only reasonable objection left to hypothetical practices of spinach-doping or sun-doping in those worlds would be fairness based on relative scarceness of these substances, but happily sun rays and spinach leaves are readily available to anyone not in extreme environmental or economic distress. I conclude that a consideration of the ethically unobjectionable uses of spinach in Popeye and the sun in Superman serve as analogies for our own world, which gives us a *pro tanto* reason to support events like the Enhanced Games.

Ivana Zagorac

University of Zagreb, Croatia

***From Categorization to Context: Rethinking Vulnerability in Sport and Beyond***

This paper challenges the prevailing view that vulnerability can be adequately managed through fixed categories and formal protections. Taking the introduction of “protected persons” in global antidoping regulation as a critical case, it argues that such frameworks do not merely fail to protect the vulnerable – they risk reproducing the very harms they seek to prevent. By simultaneously construing young athletes as both incapable and culpable, contemporary sport governance exposes a deeper conceptual flaw: vulnerability has been mistaken for a stable attribute rather than a situational condition.

In response to these tensions, the paper puts forward a contextual account of vulnerability as relational, dynamic, and irreducible to demographic markers such as age. It further demonstrates how the institutional fusion of vulnerability with victimhood generates restrictive moral stereotypes, while the parallel glorification of resilience displaces structural critique onto individual adaptation. Together, these tendencies produce a paradoxical regime in which the vulnerable are at once overprotected, underprotected, and misrecognized.

The paper reorients the ethics of vulnerability toward a model grounded in shared human exposure and the affective capacity for compassion. It contends that only by integrating contextual sensitivity with a non-reductive understanding of human agency can ethical and regulatory frameworks avoid paternalism, resist depoliticization, and respond adequately to the lived realities of those they claim to protect.



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