

ETHICAL CONTROVERSIES OF FAIR PLAY IN MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

ETIČKE KONTROVERZE FER – PLEJA U MEŠOVITIM BORILAČKIM VEŠTINAMA

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ABSTRACT

Fair play in sport, except for the respect of written rules, applies to respecting unwritten rules that fall within the domain of morality. General moral principles are also sporting principles, and the morality of athletes depends largely on whether a fair play manifests itself in sport. In the paper, the author deals with the ethical issue of fair play in sport, as moral principles manifest themselves in sport through fair play and the importance of moral principles for sport and social values. Also, the author deals with the origin of mixed martial arts and their development as a sport, the manifestation of fairness through respect for established rules, the moral dilemmas that athletes can find in and outside sports arena, as well as the actions of athletes to win them. Lately, it is not uncommon for athletes to act dishonestly, both at and outside sports arena, in order to reach a specific goal in competitions, and therefore, they are led by various discussions regarding the fair play in sport.

Key words: *normative approach, teleological approach, artistic approach, utilitarianism.*

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Ethical problematization of fair play in mixed martial arts

In contemporary society, under the influence of increasing commercialization of sports, and therefore under the influence of large amounts of money that go with the popularization of these sports, the concept of fair play in sports is also associated with negative connotations of unfair practices, corruption and the giving of unauthorized substances to athletes by the physician who, in each major club has in its composition (Brkljačić 2007; Sturza Milić, & Šekeljić 2012; Savić, & Aleksić 2015). "Therefore, clearing with critical mind and visionary awareness is one of the most important tasks of sport. It is the education of man by ruling relations and values that receive mythological value" (Simonović, & Simonović, 2005: 13). Fair play in English means a fair game, representing the attitude of the athletes' actions, refers to the respect of the rules of the game and is a set of unwritten rules, that is, a set of moral principles relating to the treatment of athletes according to the code of honor, chivalry and virtues that adorn and emphasize each individual. Respect of the rules of the game depends, in addition to sports federations and persons in charge of controlling the implementation of certain rules, on the morality of athletes (Kozarčanin, 2008). Through sports, a man tries to maximally improve his motor skills and physical abilities of his body. A true athlete in his opponent sees no obstacle on the way to achieving his goal, but sees him as an instrument for assessing his ability to advance (Brkljačić, 2007).

Fair play in sport is reflected in the moral dilemmas that occur in certain situations, both in sports and outside. In every sport discipline, whether it's a collective sport or an individual, there are

certain rules of the game. The rules of the game, except that they represent the laws by which the competition is played, are imbued with moral norms. Moral norms in sport are reflected through a fair play that triggers the rehearsal of their intentions during the game. Fair play, as part of sport, intends to awaken athletes' sports spirit in order to adopt the true values of sports, which are actually moral values (Brkljačić, 2007; Čeh, 2013).

Sport is divided into two basic groups: collective and individual. A person can be engaged in sports professionally, recreationally or as amateur. According to a further division, sport is divided into: professional, amateur, recreational, and school sports (Ilić, 2012).

The significance of fair play is also reflected in the education of young people, who can learn sportsmen from something that is good, and these are moral values that adorn the game and sport. Young people can learn fair play in sports and that victory is not the most important thing by observing the example given by Mike Pantangco in an amateur MMA match when he handed over the sword he received because he saw that he too hurt his opponent and that he would permanently hurt if you continue the fight (Sport News, 2018).

"Every country leads a certain policy in the field of social activities, and so does in sport, that is, sports (physical) culture. Peaceful active existence, change of political systems, competition, national, religious and racial discrimination, no doubt, are issues that are necessarily reflected in sports" (Brkljačić, 2007: 232).

By some authors cite (Radovanović, & Ponorac, 2014) "sport morality belongs to the general field of morality in the context of sports. It is manifested in the beliefs, courts and procedures that relate to what is right and what is wrong and immoral in sport, and

includes fair play, sportiness and character" (Radovanović, & Ponorac, 2014: 127).

If a true sports spirit is awakened in every individual based on moral principles, then the fair play will be developed (Brkljačić, 2007). In this way, the rules of the game will be esteemed. At one of the most prestigious competitions, Nick Diaz approached

his opponent (Frank Shamrock) while lying defeated on the floor, saying, "You have to get up, you're a legend" ("You gotta get up, you're a legend"), and Matt Serra's defeat, he raised his opponent (Georges St-Pierre) and celebrated his victory with him, the judges and other participants in some sporting event (Sport News, 2018). "The most valuable contribution to the sport is the acceptance of defeat. Accepting defeat in sport ensures victory in solving and worn with problems in life" (Brkljačić, 2007: 232).

Mixed martial arts (MMA) date back to ancient Greece. The origins of mixed martial arts are related to the sport Pankration (pan - all, short - power or strength) that originated around the year 648 BC and represented a mixture of wrestling and boxing, with very brutal rules that the match would end if one contestant raises his hand or remains unconscious, and often the fight ends with the death of one or both competitors. In this sport, it was forbidden to eat an opponent and "dig" his eyes, and that was the only rule. This sport was so popular that it was included in the Olympic Games, and for the benefit of popularity it is a fact that the Romans took over this sport and updated it through famous gladiatorial struggles (Šiljak, 2007; Mitrić, 2013; Soldo, 2015).

Data on the development of mixed martial arts indicate that many nations, from different parts of the world, have for centuries had in their tradition a certain

combination of martial arts that were included in traditional competitions and rituals (Šiljak, 2007).

"Japan can freely be called the father of MMA, and America is the mother of that sport" (Soldo, 2015: 1). It is believed that the MMA in Japan gained worldwide popularity in the Pride Fighting Championship sports competitions purchased by another UFC (Ultimate Fight Championship) from America to quit and thus become the leader in the sport. "Therefore, MMA gets great media attention and becomes the fastest growing sport in the world" (Soldo, 2015: 1).

"Contemporary MMA mostly originates from the competition without rules (Vale Tudo), which became popular in Brazil in the early 20th century. This sport has achieved international success only since 1993 through the Ultimate Fight Championship, which was launched by Rorion Gracie in the USA" (Soldo, 2015: 1). The MMA includes boxing, kickboxing, maitai boxing, wrestling, judo, aikido, taekwondo, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and others, hence the very name of mixed martial arts (Soldo, 2015:1).

Many believe that in the modern MMA there are no rules by which competitors participate, but that it is a breast fight in the chest where everything is allowed. In favor of this, it is not so, say that there are rules for professional MMA, and for amateur MMA, which includes a lot more rules regarding the protection of competitors than for professional MMA, which does not mean that the professional is not accounted for the safety of the competitors, which was prescribed by the US Athletic Commission under the Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts (Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports, 2016).

Normative approach - Fair play as a respect for established rules

Ethics and morality drag their roots to the very first living communities of people, in which there were certain rules of behavior in order to better the function of the group.

For the sake of the benefit of the human community, such code of conduct or norms have led to the allocation, acceptance and approval of only good behavioral patterns. The development of civilizations and societies in the world also develops morale. Moral principles represent a code of conduct and involve the constant review of intentions and actions of both their own and others (Singer, 2004).

Sport represents the human need for movement and involves various activities (Đorđević, 2010), that is, it encompasses all activities with a common goal – competition ie. by weighing "your strength in the processes of creativity" (Čeh, 2013). One of the basics of sports are the rules of the game that are different depending on sports discipline (Kozarčanin, 2008).

Ethics, as a philosophy of morality, is also permeated through sports. At the very beginning, there must be a clear distinction between morals and laws. Law is not the same as morality. It must have been related to the procedures behind which the intention is primarily, and for the actions as such, we have the possibility of moral evaluation (Perović, 2013).

Sport has a great impact on social values and is therefore also useful for them. "There is no country in the world that does not pay special attention to sports and sports activities. Sports fights have become some kind of polygons on which countries (through their competitors) check and confirm their prestige. The top results and successes in the one competitions are ranked

as the highest social values" (Radoš, 2004: 11). As the best example of respecting the rules of this sport and honoring him, one of the best MMA athletes of all time, the Russian representative of this sport, Fedor Emelianenko can be taken without any sting in his career, who is popularly called the Last Emperor precisely because of his honorable and great careers.

The theological aspect - Victory justifies the means

Outside arena, there are certain dilemmas. When it comes to ethics in sports, the most often first consideration is the use of illicit substances, that is doping, by athletes to move their own physical boundaries and achieve better results. Then, a competitor can have a moral dilemma whether to defeat the opponent in an improper way in the sports competition that follows. In a professional MMA sport, a case has been reported that a well-known fighter, Thiago Silva, went as far as to hand over a doping control sample with urine of animal origin so as not to be discovered to have used illicit means to win the match, which cost him being punished, banned from MMA sports for a year, and a fine of \$33,750. Due to the enormous amount of money that can be earned in a professional sport in a short time, athletes often use unfair ways to earn money that sets as a priority against a fair play. Simonović and Simonović state that "the faster the capital turnover, there are less places for human" (Simonović, Simonović, 2005: 7). Hence the famous maxim that sport is too big a business to be just a game.

"A sports ethic that can and should be emphasized is the one that respects the participants as people, but also the one that avoids making a double error: that is, on the one hand, there is not enough room left to

manipulate ideas in sports that advocate for the intelligent use of force, on the other hand, individuals (athletes) in search of a win (profit) would not be able to do something wrong, which would violate the moral principles of the sport, but also themselves" (Anastasovski, 2014: 1). In the context of profit, egoism appears in the function of putting its own interests above the interests of other people.

Egoism will not be considered something bad if an athlete wants to improve his interests, unless he does something that is morally unacceptable in order to achieve those interests.

Piter Singer, according to Kurt Bajer, according to psychological egoism as one of five versions of egoism, "as a rule, egoists are characterized by desires or motivations governed by self-esteem, and by non-egoists with desires and motives that »adequately« respect others" (Singer, 2004: 291). "After the work of Kant, Rid and Bentham, it has become widely accepted that the basic principle of morality must be the principle that everyone can use" (Singer, 2004: 222).

Artistic approach - Fair play in the function of moral behavior

In addition to linking different cultures and removing barriers of racial affiliation, the experiences of these cultures also exchange. In this way, the sport represents multiculturalism, racial intolerance is eliminated, the feeling of belonging to the world community develops, there is awareness raising among all actors of sports events, from players to fans of a sports club.

According to Milenko Perović, Kant's "the principle of morality is an inner conviction (intentio), not an external consequence of the action (operatio). The principle of morality is the basic subject of

ethics. Ethics rests on the notions of freedom, need, duty, moral law and categorical imperative" (Perović, 2013: 34). The categorical imperative refers to the duty that is the driver of the rightful act.

"Deontological ethics or ethics of conscience refer to the consciousness, that is, it considers it a duty to follow moral attitudes and attitudes, where *sine lege autem poena conscientia est* (when there is no law, punishment is consequence). In her considerations she calls the so-called. A golden rule of respect for others in practicing sports, with possible references to a whole array of philosophers like I. Kant and his categorical imperative, but also the imperatives in the way Kung Fu Tse, Tales, Jesus expressed them ..." (Škerbić, 2014: 60).

Regarding moral dilemmas at the battlefield, they are reflected through internal rehearsals of the competitor himself of his actions, or of his intentions during the game. In a competitor, driven by a desire for victory, there is a struggle between what is good and right and what is not. A fair play and a sports spirit can manifest if a competitor notices that an opponent has injured himself and points to an opponent's injury by requesting assistance, like MMA fighter Danny Missin, who asked that the match be interrupted in order to help his opponent, or I helped him like a professional MMA fighter Bakhtiyar Arzumanov in one match, wading a protective mouthguard from his opponent's mouth to prevent this from suffocating. Namely, if the competitor notices or does something that is bad and is not allowed, and the judges and other contest participants do not notice it, there is a dilemma in the competitor whether to act properly and report to the judge that procedure, or not (Sport News, 2018).

This dilemma relates to an in-depth review by an athlete of what is beneficial to

him in such a situation, how he sees the benefit at all, whether he will be happy or not, if he notifies or does not report to the judge what he has noticed. "The classic form of utilitarian attitude was given by Bentham. He tried to justify moral, political, legislative and government fields a lucrative - calculating principle. On the basis of the hedonistic attitude, it sets the principle of utility as the highest principle of judging morals and rights.

The principle of usefulness equals the principle of happiness" (Perović, 2013: 365). According to Peter Singer, Bentham argued that his utilitarian principle - that we need to achieve as much happiness as possible - is at first sight rational and provides a rational method for making moral decisions" (Singer, 2004: 222), and that "it is no coincidence that Bentham and his philosophy were at the center of an active group of political reformers" (Singer, 2004: 222).

If a contestant reports to the judge a bad procedure he noticed or confesses his mistake alone, there is a manifestation of fair play and the construction of a real sport spirit, both in the individual and in the whole sport, and the competitor himself, by his own actions, leaves the situation as a moral winner. "The consequential or

consequential ethics is a widespread form of sports ethics with a number of problem situations and issues, among which in particular the dominant" utilitarian behavior "of athletes in deciding which series of actions to take, and to take it or not only considerably well (benefit) for your own team (or yourself) or good (advantage) for the game (or sport) as a whole" (Škerbić, 2014: 61).

CONCLUSION

From the ethical point of view, the fair play can be viewed through the actions of central players in sporting events in certain situations, at and outside sports arena, relating to the respect for written and unwritten rules to be followed. An athlete's career, which is based precisely on his career paths, is represented by the respect of these rules. The understanding of utilitarianism by athletes can be said to have the most significant effect on their moral dilemmas before which they are often found. Athletes' procedures in situations where they morally "break" can be characterized as chivalry and honorary treatment, or condemnation because their actions were dishonest and wicked.

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SAŽETAK

Fer – plej u sportu osim što se odnosi na poštovanje pisanih pravila, odnosi se i na poštovanje nepisanih pravila koja spadaju u domen morala. Opšta moralna načela predstavljaju i sportska načela, a od moralnosti sportista umnogome zavisi da li će se u sportu manifestovati fer – plej. U radu, razmatrano je etičko pitanje fer – pleja u sportu, kako se moralna načela manifestuju u sportu kroz fer – plej i kakav značaj imaju moralna načela za sport i društvene vrednosti. Takođe, autor se bavi poreklom mešovitih borilačkih veština i njihovim razvojem kao sporta, manifestovanjem fer – pleja kroz poštovanje ustanovljenih pravila, moralnim dilemama pred kojima se sportisti nalaze na sportskim borilištima i van njih, kao i postupcima koje čine sportisti kako bi došli do pobede. U poslednje vreme, neretko se dešava da sportisti postupaju nečasno, kako na sportskim borilištima tako i van njih, da bi došli do određenog cilja na takmičenjima pa se samim tim vode različite diskusije u vezi sa fer – plejom u sportu.

Ključne reči: *normativni pristup, teleološki pristup, aretistički pristup, utilitarizam.*

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