

Applied Ethics for Sport Managers

By Kadence Otto. Published 2019 by Carolina Press, Durham, NC. \$30.00. 180 pp. ISBN 978-1-5310-1236-6

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This sport ethics book, written by Kadence Otto, with its 159 pages excluding references and index, seems short and easy to read if you are prone to “judge a book by its cover.” Don’t let the length fool you, though; it is very comprehensive. And speaking of covers, this one is graced by an image of Rodin’s “The Thinker,” so it might appear daunting at first, especially to students taking a course in sport ethics who might easily be intimidated by the thought of reading about philosophy and morality. At least, that’s what my undergraduate students in such a class had to say after only a cursory glance, but more about that later. The length and appearance of this book belie the quality and quantity of information. This is good book on sport ethics that almost feels like a primer.

Otto clearly defines the purpose of her book in the preface—the ascension of sport manager to sport leader in three areas: professionalism, ethics, and social responsibility, or, specifically, what the successful sport manager (leader) *must* do (professionalism), *should* do (ethics), and *can* do (social responsibility). Given the complexity of the subject of ethics, this makes it easier for the reader (and students) to understand the differences between these three concepts. Spoiler alert: After reading the book, and not initially being clear on the reasons for this format, I can honestly say the author delivered 100% on her stated purpose. The organization of the book absolutely made everything come full circle, at least for this reviewer. One needs to read the book to see how it works, but it is worth it.

The book is organized into three parts with 15 chapters. A brief summary of each chapter follows. Part I, “Becoming the Complete Sport Manager,” consists of five chapters. Chapter 1, “The Values of Sport,” guides the reader through the basics of sport ethics and includes important concepts such as values and principles associated with sport, in addition to the differences between sportsmanship and gamesmanship and the types of cheating. This is an important chapter and serves as the framework for a thorough understanding of sport ethics. Also, from a personal perspective, this is exactly how I begin and structure my courses in sport ethics. Chapter 2, “Sport as a Business,” covers essentials for careers in the sport industry, including an understanding of professionalism, standards of conduct, civility, etiquette, and policies in the workplace, whether sport or otherwise. While it is not unique or profound information, it is rarely seen in other sport ethics books, and it is entirely useful and necessary for students to understand, particularly in the current age of political correctness.

Once Otto has established the basics, she formally introduces the topic of ethics in Chapter 3, “The Motivation Behind Our Actions,” which contains a review of morality in sport and the necessity of morality in sport leadership.

The author also introduces the concept of moral development and provides a comprehensive explanation of Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of development. Kohlberg's model is used and referenced from that point forward, mostly as a method to reinforce theoretical applications and provide an understanding of how morality and moral behavior are related. Chapter 4, "Becoming an Ethical Sport Manager," covers teleological and deontological theories of ethics and provides a comprehensive explanation of specific theories under each category, for example, egoism, altruism, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics (teleology); Kantian duty-based ethics, and Rawls's theory of logical moral reasoning (deontology). While an understanding of these theories is critical in any ethics course including sport ethics, Otto does an excellent job of using specific examples and sport-related cases to explain them. In addition, useful figures and diagrams (here and throughout the book) are included to graphically illustrate the differences, similarities, and connection between the theories and Kohlberg's stages of moral development.

Finally, in Chapter 5, the last chapter in Part I, the "Dialectic" is discussed and explained using social change and the NFL (National Football League) as an example. The dialectic is defined as "an exchange of ideas between people holding different views who seek to establish the truth by way of logic and reason" (p. 46), and it occurs in three stages: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Again using a figure to illustrate, Otto introduces theories of justice including libertarian, utilitarian, and egalitarian and the values that must exist to apply these to create a just society. In addition, the economic systems of capitalism and socialism and fundamental values associated with both are explained. A useful summary of the theories of justice and economic systems is provided in Figure 5.7 (p. 54). Interestingly and appropriately, the author uses a well-researched case study, "football's concussion crisis," to integrate the concepts in this chapter, and the attendant discussion questions cover the various theories and application of the dialectic well.

Part II, "Ethical Sport Managers in Action," deals with what sport leaders should do and focuses on ethics in the workplace in addition to some specific ethical issues sport managers might face. Chapter 6, "Cultivate a Healthy Work Culture," includes short discussions of organizational essentials such as staffing, recruiting, hiring and firing, and compensation. Otto segues into the ethical issue of workplace discrimination and sets the stage for further and more specific issues. For example, in Chapter 7, the media, marketing, promotions, and advertising are highlighted, and ethical challenges in new forms of communication are featured, including current cases. Price, ticketing, and ticket sales, with emphasis on the ethical issues, are featured in Chapter 8, and the author provides a topical case dealing with ticket sales in the secondary market for discussion.

Chapter 9, "Ensure a Safe and Respectful Sporting Environment," is a condensed version of what might be contained in a course in sport-event and facility management. It includes important topics such as risk, security, concession and alcohol management, and fan behavior and, like previous chapters, contains relevant and current examples and current cases.

The final section, Part III, "Socially Responsible Sport Leaders," is devoted to what sport leaders "can" do and addresses the author's call to action via social responsibility. Chapter 10, "Honor the Rights of All Sport Participants," deals with ideologies and inclusion, with a focus on "inequity, lack of opportunity, and an absence of respect and fairness" (p. 106) in sport. Through the dialectical model