



Health and sport

Exam task

1 You are going to read a review of a book about sport and philosophy. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Knowing the score

William Skidelsky reviews David Papineau's new book, in which sport meets philosophy.

David Papineau is an eminent philosopher and a passionate lover of sport. For much of his life, he has kept the two spheres separate, fearing that to mix them would produce a double negative in his readers' appreciation of his work: philosophy robbed of its seriousness and sport of its excitement. Then, in 2012, a colleague invited him to contribute to a lecture series titled 'Philosophy and Sport', organised to coincide with that year's Olympics. 'I couldn't really refuse', Papineau recalls. 'I had an extensive knowledge of both philosophy and sport. If I wasn't going to say yes, who would?'

For his topic, he chose the role of conscious thought in fast-reaction sports, such as tennis, cricket and baseball. How, he wondered, do top tennis players like Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams use anything other than 'automatic reflexes' in the half-second (or less) they have to return their opponent's serve? How do they choose to hit the ball this way or that, to apply topspin or slice? Thinking about this not only proved 'great fun', but allowed Papineau to come away with a series of 'substantial philosophical conclusions' about the relationship between intentions and action.

After this, the floodgates were open. Having breached his self-imposed division, Papineau set about applying his philosopher's brain to a range of other sporting topics. Five years on, those inquiries have resulted in a book, *Knowing the Score*. This is essentially a collection of essays on whatever sporting questions happen to interest its author. It isn't comprehensive, nor does it advance an overarching argument. The tone – informal, anecdotal, contrarian – is more popular philosophy than academic. What unifies the book is the consistency of its approach rather than of its content: he isn't interested only in applying philosophical ideas and principles to sport. More importantly – and more originally – he wants to use arguments about sport as a launching pad into philosophy.

A good example comes in a chapter dealing with rule-breaking, in which Papineau sets off with a sporting

example in order to draw parallels with broader contexts. He points out that what is acceptable in sport isn't defined by the rules alone. Sometimes it's usual to ignore them – as footballers do when they pull on opponents' shirts as the ball flies towards them. Other actions stem from a sense of fair play – such as halting the game when an opponent is lying injured – rather than arising directly from rules. Rules are just one constraint on behaviour; all sports also have codes of fair play, which operate alongside the rules, and which, in some cases, override them. Complicating matters further is the fact that official authority ultimately has a force that is greater than both. Whatever a sport's rules or codes specify, the referee or ruling body's decision is final.

Papineau argues that there's a 'remarkably close' analogy between sport's multi-level structure and the factors that constrain us in ordinary life. In sport, you can ignore the rules and still play fairly, or obey the law while being thought a cheat; similarly, in a society, citizens can break the law and still do the right thing, or comply with the law yet still indulge in objectionable behaviour. A sport's codes aren't the same as its rules; likewise, in life, we draw a distinction between virtue and legal compliance. Papineau argues that we have no general obligation to obey the law; only to do what we think is right. Yet, saying that we're not obliged to obey the law isn't the same as saying that we don't have a duty to respect the state's authority. If people didn't accept that police officers are generally entitled to tell them what to do, society might descend into chaos. Likewise, if footballers stopped listening when referees blow their whistles, the game would become a free-for-all.

Knowing the Score covers an impressive amount of ground. At a time when data analysis dominates 'serious' discussion of sport, Papineau's faith in the power of anecdote and reasoning is refreshing. The author at times gives the impression of being the sort of person who knows he's the cleverest in the room. For the most part, however, he barely puts a foot wrong in what is a blinder of a performance.

- In the first paragraph, the reviewer suggests that Papineau
 - was in two minds whether to take on the lectures on sport and philosophy.
 - thought no one was better qualified than him to combine sport and philosophy.
 - was disappointed with previous attempts to unite sport and philosophy.
 - thought that philosophy was of greater value to people's lives than sport.
- What does the reviewer say Papineau gained through delivering his lecture series?
 - knowledge of how 'automatic reflexes' suppress conscious thought in many situations
 - insight into the steps involved when sports stars have to make choices under pressure
 - understanding of the connections between people's aims and what they subsequently do
 - awareness of why sports stars' reactions are superior to those of ordinary people
- What point is made about Papineau's book in the third paragraph?
 - It examines previously overlooked aspects of sport.
 - Its style is inappropriate for the subject matter.
 - It doesn't convincingly link sport and philosophy.
 - The areas of sport that it covers are very diverse.
- What does the reviewer suggest in the fourth paragraph?
 - Breaking rules should be punished more consistently by those in power.
 - Rules play only a partial role in defining what is appropriate or inappropriate.
 - Many sportsmen and women abuse situations which lack a clear set of rules.
 - Codes of fair play carry more weight with sports stars than official rules.
- In the fifth paragraph, the reviewer draws a comparison between behaviour in sport and
 - a broad system of morality in society.
 - a deep respect for authority in society.
 - people's tolerance of unreasonable laws.
 - society's attitudes towards rule-breakers.
- In the final paragraph, the reviewer says that Papineau
 - uses too lightweight an approach to deal with philosophical issues.
 - relies overly on insignificant detail to support his opinions.
 - comes across as somewhat arrogant in various parts of the book.
 - chooses some poor examples to illustrate points he's making.

2

Choose the correct alternative to complete these sentences.

- He started his talk by *point / to point / pointing* out that he had worked as a professional coach.
- To avoid / Avoid / Avoiding* injury throughout a whole career is, of course, impossible.
- After a few years in the game, players really ought *know / to know / knowing* what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.
- The team are so far ahead in the league that they really need not *worry / to worry / worrying* about today's result.
- When *join / to join / joining* a new club, players always undergo a thorough medical examination.
- Everybody was really looking forward *watching / to watch / to watching* the match.
- If you look on the internet, you're bound *find / to find / to finding* a club near where you live.
- Their manager didn't seem to mind me *ask / to ask / asking* him about his team's poor result.

Exam facts

- In this part, you read a long text.
- You have to choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for six questions.

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