Fair Play
REVISTA DE FILOSOFÍA, ÉTICA Y DERECHO DEL DEPORTE
www.upf.edu/revistafairplay

Conduct of Life and Endurance Sport

Doug Hochstetler
Penn State University, Lehigh Valley
Andrew Krebs
Penn State University, University Park

Citar este artículo como: Doug Hochstetler -Andrew Krebs (2018): Conduct of Life and Endurance Sport, *Fair Play*. *Revista de Filosofía, Ética y Derecho del Deporte*, vol. 12, p. 1-20

FECHA DE RECEPCIÓN: 12 de Junio de 2018
FECHA DE ACEPTAPCIÓN: 5 de Septiembre 2018

Conduct of Life and Endurance Sport

Doug Hochstetler-Andrew Krebs

Penn State University

Abstract

Our aim here (as an academician and a practitioner) is to conceptualize sport integrity and ethics in a broad way to focus on conduct in life. In other words, our intent is to address the question of how we should live, on a day-to-day basis, as endurance athletes. In this paper we will briefly examine the theoretical constructs regarding the transactional nature of endurance sport and ethics. We will do so within the context of the American philosophical tradition. These conceptual themes include the significance of endurance sport for participants; the creation of identity around these pursuits; and the potential ethical issues that arise for the endurance sport enthusiast. In the latter part of the paper we explore potential answers to these questions – broad concepts with possibilities for reaping the benefits of endurance sport participation, while minimizing the negative ethical impact. Our research approach, following the radical empiricism of William James, places a premium on lived experience found in and through endurance sport. We emphasize here the practitioner perspective, a lived experience of sorts, the insights earned through lengthy participation in endurance sport pursuits. To this end, throughout the paper we alternate between formal, scholarly prose and the practitioner perspective.

Key Words: endurance sport, ethics, conduct of life, American philosophy, balance

Resumen

Nuestro objetivo aquí (como académico y practicante) es conceptualizar la integridad y la ética del deporte de una manera amplia para centrarnos en la conducta en la vida. En otras palabras, nuestra intención es abordar la cuestión de cómo debemos vivir, día a día, como atletas de resistencia. En este artículo examinaremos brevemente las construcciones teóricas sobre la naturaleza transaccional del deporte de resistencia y la ética. Lo haremos en el contexto de la tradición filosófica estadounidense. Estos temas conceptuales incluyen la importancia del deporte de resistencia para los participantes, la creación de identidad en torno a estas actividades y los posibles problemas éticos que surgen para los entusiastas del deporte de resistencia. En la última parte del documento exploramos las posibles respuestas a estas preguntas - conceptos amplios con posibilidades de cosechar los beneficios de la participación en el deporte de resistencia, a la vez que se minimiza el impacto ético negativo. Nuestro enfoque de investigación, siguiendo el empirismo radical de William James, prima la experiencia vivida en y a través del deporte de resistencia. Enfatizamos aquí la perspectiva del practicante, una experiencia vivida de alguna manera, las percepciones obtenidas a través de una larga participación en actividades deportivas de resistencia. Para ello, a lo largo del trabajo alternamos entre la prosa formal, la prosa académica y la perspectiva del practicante.

Palabras clave: deporte de resistencia, ética, conducta de vida, filosofía americana, equilibrio.

1. Introduction

Those who follow sport recognize that participants may not always act in accordance with team rules, organizational policy, or ethics in general. While team sport concerns regarding sport integrity and ethics may be more prevalent and high profile (e.g., concussion problems in American football; sexual assault and abuse, cheating in various forms), endurance sport has its own set of issues and controversies. Cycling, for example, has a long history of performance enhancement use, from strychnine in the early 20th century to amphetamines in the 1940s, to more recent issues of blood doping and Erythropoietin (EPO). Additionally, Jemima Sumgong, the 2016 Olympic marathon champion, tested positive for EPO on a 2017 drug test.

These issues, while important for sure, are not what American philosopher William James (1956) described as "live options" of inquiry for many endurance athletes, including the authors of this paper. Across the world, the bulk of endurance athletes are not at the elite levels and do not have the financial resources to enhance performance by unethical means in the aforementioned ways. In short, these types of ethical dilemmas are simply not "live" or accessible options for the everyday endurance athletes. They may be important research questions, but we leave them to other scholars.

Our aim here (as an academician and a practitioner) is to conceptualize sport integrity and ethics in a broad way to focus on conduct in life. In other words, our intent is to address the question of how we should live, on a day-to-day basis, as endurance athletes. We want to think about questions such as, what is the significance of endurance sport; how should we structure our lives around endurance sport; and to what extent can sport organizations create and foster a culture conducive to these aims? These questions and focus regarding conduct of life fit well within the philosophical literature, most closely with the American philosophical tradition, especially with regards to transcendentalism.

In this paper we will briefly examine the theoretical constructs regarding the transactional nature of endurance sport and ethics. We will do so within the context of the American

philosophical tradition (for reasons to be explained later). These conceptual themes include the significance of endurance sport for participants; the creation of identity around these pursuits; and the potential ethical issues that arise for the endurance sport enthusiast. In the latter part of the paper we explore potential answers to these questions – broad concepts with possibilities for reaping the benefits of endurance sport participation, while minimizing the negative ethical impact. Our research approach, following the radical empiricism of William James, places a premium on lived experience found in and through endurance sport. As Anderson and Lally (2004) contend, "radical empiricism, which is 'radical' because it includes our experiences of relations as well as of things, lets experience speak for itself and does not try to make it fit an a priori logical scheme" (p. 17). We emphasize here the practitioner perspective, a lived experience of sorts, the insights earned through lengthy participation in endurance sport pursuits. To this end, throughout the paper we alternate between formal, scholarly prose and the practitioner perspective.

Before proceeding, and congruent with the aims of this special issue, we want to explain our angle of vision, a term Ralph Waldo Emerson (1981) used to denote how our personal experiences shape the lens through which we view our surroundings. One of us is a scholar who focuses on endurance sport as it intersects with issues in American philosophy – in the writings of James, Thoreau, Emerson, John Dewey, and more recent writers such as Henry Bugbee and Richard Rorty. This co-author also has an extensive biographical history of endurance sport experiences – two bicycle trips across the United States; several years of bike racing; running experience with includes numerous marathons and half-marathons, both as a competitor and also serving as a pace group leader (for the half-marathon distances). The other co-author brings a current practitioner perspective to the article In the paragraph to follow, this individual provides a personal introduction and also begins our process of alternating between academic writing, interspersed with the lived experience of the practitioner in first-person language.

Practitioner Perspective: During my decade-plus "career" as a self-coached amateur triathlete, I have completed more than forty races and started eight Ironman-distance events. In the process, I have devoted hundreds of hours to swim, bike, and run training. I have spent untold hours thinking about, assembling, and disassembling training plans and analyzing

training sessions and race results. I have spent thousands of dollars on gear and race registrations. As I've gotten older, I have more frequently faced off against internal doubts about this identity-defining aspect of my life and the ways it aligns or conflicts with my many roles including as a husband, father, student, employee, and manager.

2. Theoretical constructs related to endurance sport and ethics:

In this section we want to highlight and explain concepts related to endurance sport and ethics. We frame our thinking and writing with the American philosophical tradition in mind, using concepts highlighted in the works of American philosophers to shed light on ethical issues in endurance sport. In terms of providing clarity around the notion of endurance sport, we have in mind a certain type of endurance athlete – those who train purposefully for endurance events; individuals who train more than necessary to gain health benefits; individuals who are deeply committed to their respective sport practice.

2.1 Personal Narrative and Growth

Practitioner Perspective: My journey as an amateur triathlete began in the months prior to my first sprint-distance triathlon, not as a committed endurance athlete but more as a dilettante trying something new. My initial race preparation would most accurately be described as a weekly collection of workouts rather than a training plan, per se. After that first race, though—one in which I experienced some measure of success—I was hooked. No longer a bucket-list pursuit or a quest to lose a few pounds, I quickly transitioned into the role of committed endurance athlete with an increasing focus on achieving performance gains via intentional—albeit self-created—training plans based on hours of reading and research. In my first summer of competition, I would sign up for and complete four more races including an Olympic-distance triathlon in Chicago, more than 500 miles away from my home. I also registered for my first Ironman race, a target for the following summer.

Part of the significance of endurance sport entails a personal narrative of sorts. Anderson and Lally (2004) write that endurance sport provides "one useful route to exploring our own personal possibilities and thus to exploring what makes our lives significant" (p. 17). Participation in endurance sport is not a recipe for all, but the activities do open the possibility for this individual exploration – just how fast, how far, and how long can we go?

Participation in endurance sport provides the opportunity for continual learning from and through experience. Running, for example, involves an ongoing opportunity for what John McDermott (2007) terms "making relations" – through the course of everyday training runs, the runner comes into contact with challenges and experiences through which the runner learns about herself. This becomes an ongoing learning opportunity, and a potentially transformative one as the runner reflects on these occasions and continually grows as a result.

2.2 Sense of Purpose

Practitioner Perspective: Following high school, where much of my identity was defined by participation in athletics—soccer, swimming, and track—the role of sport participation in my life steadily declined. By the time I graduated from college and moved to Los Angeles to begin my career, I no longer even owned a pair of running shoes. Occasionally I would go for a ride or hike in the mountains around L.A., but my attention was primarily focused elsewhere: on establishing my new career and on living in a new place.

It wasn't until my wife and I moved back to the East Coast, and the college town we had departed just a few years earlier, that I began searching for something to fill the space in my life. I was nearing the end of my twenties, my job was less stressful than the one I left on the West Coast, we did not yet have children. Free time was plentiful and there were fewer interesting ways to fill it in a small town focused, it seemed, on primarily meeting the needs of college students. In many ways, my life had shrunk in size and significance. I felt a need to test myself and I began visiting the gym to run on the treadmill or ride the stationery bike. For the first time in years, I swam a lap in the pool. I purchased my first road bike since I was a teenager and registered for my first sprint-distance triathlon.

It is crucial to ask questions with regards to the significance of lives built around endurance sport. In more concrete terms, why would someone willingly run 26.2 miles? Additionally, why spend 16-18 weeks of training, completing several 20 mile or more runs, in order to prepare for a marathon? What is the significance of these pursuits, especially in light of the fact that scores of endurance athletes do not compete for prize money, public notoriety, or any other financial gain. It is patently clear that this question of purpose, for many endurance sport enthusiasts, goes far beyond exercising for medicinal reasons, for stress relief, weight control, and so forth – although they engage in endurance sport for these

reasons as well.

There is a sense in which endurance sport provides opportunities for "gaming up" (Kretchmar, 2008) the normal life, or perhaps filling in some existential gaps. For those whose 9-5 jobs provide a mundane existence, running or cycling or swimming may hold exiting possibilities and opportunities. Training for and competing in a marathon race, for example, brings about a very tangible opportunity for exploring personal capabilities. The entire training process itself – the relentless schedule of daily and weekly mileage, with fastidious attention to recovery, hydration, nutrition, flexibility, and so forth – provides rich prospects for exploration and growth.

2.3 Challenge and Commitment

Practitioner Perspective: In my mind, my first season of triathlon competition had been a success. Although most of the races I entered were small—with the exception of the Chicago Triathlon, which billed itself as one of the world's largest—I nonetheless managed respectable age-group or overall placements in each. I sometimes wonder whether I would have continued to pursue the sport to such a degree if had finished those early races in the middle or at the back of the pack. Instead, by the end of that first summer, triathlon was a key part of my identity and I was looking ahead to a half-iron distance race in California followed by an Ironman-distance race in Lake Placid; both in the next year. Already, I was planning my six-month training plan with its 18-, 19-, and 20-plus hour weeks in the quest for peak performance in Lake Placid in late July 2006.

It is possible for endurance sport participation to teach us about conduct of life in our broader lives beyond endurance sport. For example, Anderson and Lally (2004) contend that endurance sport, when viewed as a creative act of sorts, may open participants "onto a panoramic view of human existence in such a way as to allow us to be articulate about what our ideals are and about what human existence might, in part, mean" (p. 21). Through participating in running, cycling, or swimming, it is possible to work towards aspects of life such as commitment and dedication, setting goals and coping with both success and failure. Getting out of bed on a chilly winter morning at 5:00 a.m. in order to complete a track workout, for example, demonstrates a very vivid example of commitment. This quality may

potentially transfer to dedication to other areas of life as well – work, relationships, hobbies, and so forth.

2.4 Immersion and Risk

Practitioner Perspective: Although I had never run a marathon, something I would be required to do as the final leg of the Ironman—not to mention the 2.4-mile swim and 112-mile bike, neither of which I had ever done either—I was already imagining ultimate success in Lake Placid: a qualifying spot in the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii. Misplaced or not, I had substituted that feeling of insignificance in many aspects of life with confidence in my newfound abilities as an athlete. Here was something I was good at and something that challenged me in new ways. Through the first half of 2006, as my primary race drew closer, more of my time was being devoted to training, thinking about training, and daydreaming about Ironman glory. I was on a quest and on each successive week was pushing beyond where I had been before athletically by logging more miles and more time. My early morning training sessions added new purpose to the start of typical workdays spent sitting at a desk, pecking away at a computer keyboard. Weekend activities were planned with training "obligations" in mind.

This move from neophyte to a self-identified endurance athlete occurs gradually but also through both immersion and commitment, terms Henry Bugbee (1976) explored in his book, The Inward Morning. Bugbee argues for attention to both self and others, an alertness to intimations through reflection and commitment. Bugbee also recognizes that these intimations ultimately lead towards growth through meaning. He writes: "That which illuminates our labors, in reflection as in other channels of endeavor, that which decisively empowers us in the deed, comes as an unanticipated precipitation of meaning" (p. 170). By exploring personal capabilities through endurance sport, one acquires meaning and understanding in ways that one may not be able to fully predict, rationalize, or explain. Yet Bugbee recommends us to trust these intimations, even as we test them out in the course of our lives.

These kind of activities and our deep and abiding engagement with other people and projects, require a certain degree of risk or what James called "precipitousness." Setting up a

training plan, for example, and committing oneself to following this plan over the course of a training cycle, occurs without any guarantees whatsoever. The runner may become injured or sick. The weather on race day may be terrible. The training plan itself may not "work" or perhaps the runner is not able to follow the plan because of other situations. Regardless, engaging in an endurance sport project requires a certain degree of (very visible and tangible) risk. This quality of risk is very public and overt. Either the cyclist hits the goal – finishes the 100-mile race, attains a personal best, achieves an age group award – or does not.

2.5 Sense of Identity

Practitioner Perspective: As I bobbed nervously in the water of Lake Placid's Mirror Lake alongside more than 2,000 athletes from across the country and around the world, waiting for the start of my first Ironman race in 2006, I had no idea what waited for me later in the day. I was confident my preparation had been sufficient. But what did I really know? In March, I had successfully completed a half iron distance race in California, which provided some gauge of my readiness. But the scope of this one was different, and since I had never attempted an ultra-distance race before, I was basing any feelings of confidence on the promises of experts who wrote the books upon which I had based my approach to training since January. I had cast my lot with strangers, albeit strangers with excellent sports science credentials.

More than a decade after that first race in Lake Placid, experience has shown that you never know the quality of your training and the wisdom of your strategy earlier in the race until you arrive at the second half of the marathon, and sometimes even later. In more than a couple Ironman races, I have emerged from the bike-to-run transition feeling great and in position for an excellent overall time. I have run past mile markers 10, 11, and 12 feeling relatively strong, doing my best to suppress fleeting thoughts of overconfidence.

In 2006 in Lake Placid, I ran the first half of the marathon at just under my goal pace. Naively, I thought I was in perfect position, but I still had more than 12 miles to go when tightness in my quads started to set in. I stopped to stretch and a violent cramp sent me to my knees on the side of the road. Several minutes ticked by before I could begin walking again. That ended up being the theme of the remainder of the race: walking. When I crossed the

finish line, though, I was ecstatic. Yes, ecstatic to be finished but also ecstatic to have reached for and touched something that felt so big—maybe too big—less than two years earlier. I was an Ironman.

Experience with and through endurance sport participation engenders a development of identity surrounding the activity. How one identifies is a crucial part of social engagement and also personal day-to-day life. We have different terms for different levels of engagement – runners and joggers, cyclists and riders (see Hopsicker & Hochstetler, 2014), for example. Sporting goods manufacturers attempt to capitalize on these identity-related qualities, hoping to garner market share within their preferred customer base. Several years ago, Pearl Izumi ran a very successful campaign highlighting the differences between runners and joggers. Their ads ran as follows: "Runners are wild. Joggers are runners who have been domesticated;" and most famously, "We are not joggers. At Pearl Izumi, we don't jog. We run. And we think that matters" (see Jonas, 2008). This ad campaign sought to distinguish itself from other brands, for example, Reebok, with its own "Run Easy" slogan. As the "newbie" begins to gradually run, bike, or swim more, she gradually takes on the qualities of an endurance athlete, and may with time self-identify as an endurance athlete, or perhaps as a runner, a cyclist, a swimmer, or even a triathlete.

Practitioner Perspective: While I still had a long way to go to qualify for Kona, I nonetheless had experienced a full spectrum of emotions and sensations in one day: anxiety, relief, exhilaration, confidence, over-confidence, fatigue, pain, joy, pride. Based on whatever knowledge I accumulated, I had taken a series of calculated risks along the way—would this training approach work, is this pace too fast, am I fueling enough or too little—and experienced a new side of life. A little over a month later, I registered for my second Ironman race, this one for the following year in Madison, Wisconsin. I was eager to experience all that again, and get faster in the process. Instead, I flatted on the ride and finished 10 minutes slower than in Lake Placid the previous year. I registered for another Ironman, back in Lake Placid, for 2008. At that race, heavy rain and cool temperatures on the bike made for a slow ride and another disappointing finish.

3. Issues Related to Conduct of Life

Despite the significance of endurance sport participation, there may be times when

endurance sport pursuits become potentially ethical challenges, when participation jeopardizes individual health and wellness, or perhaps personal relationships – with significant others or work colleagues, for example. How then do and also should endurance athletes strive towards individual goals in pursuit of endurance sport excellence, and do so while remaining committed members of a family unit, work environment, and citizen? Furthermore, to what extent may the broader sport culture (e.g., coaches, personal trainers, sport media) encourage this kind of relationship and environment?

For example, there are endurance athletes who, from the outside at least, appear to approach their sport with a religious fervor. This attitude may come across as off-putting to those not quite as committed, and has a chance to damage relationships in the process. In his article, "A triathlon ate my marriage," Helliker (2011) details the potential unhealthy implications of a serious commitment towards endurance sport in general, and triathlon competition specifically. Helliker writes, "The exercise widow often wakes to an empty bed – a sure sign of a morning workout – and may find dinner plans spoiled by a sudden avoidance of anything heavy before a night run." Triathletes, especially, engage in many hours of exercise during the week, squeezing in this time around – and at times at the expense of – work and family responsibilities. This time away from family may bring about resentment from significant others.

3.1 Drifting Towards Selfishness

Practitioner Perspective: I was tethered to the Ironman carousel, chasing the holy grail of Kona qualification but not really getting any closer to actually achieving it. Within my community, among my friends and colleagues, my identity was in large part shaped by my participation in triathlon over most other aspects of life. To me, it began to feel out of balance. My wife and I now had a 2-year-old daughter. My career felt like it had plateaued and I couldn't be certain that part of that plateauing wasn't due to my disproportionate focus on training and racing. I more readily noticed the way some of my acquaintances in the sport seemed unable to talk about anything but triathlon. Was that me, too? In part to force myself to change course, I enrolled in a part-time master's program in 2008, which pulled me away from serious training and racing, at least temporarily.

At what point does the self-regard and self-fulfillment required for an individual pursuit of

endurance sport bleed into selfishness? Does this happen at 5 hours of training per week, 10 hours, 20 hours? It is not only the participation itself that may potentially interfere with other aspects of life, but one's mental capacity as well. Even when not running, the athlete may be contemplating upcoming races, considering adjustment of a training plan, pondering an upcoming workout potential route, or monitoring the body after an especially intense workout.

We may, at times, be willing to conduct our own private business, having the luxury of focusing on one particular project (e.g., endurance sport) without needing to attend to other responsibilities. For the twenty-something single, attending graduate school part-time, for example, this may be a perfect season of life to pursue triathlon training almost exclusively. Similar to Thoreau going to Walden Pond for a two-year period, if our other responsibilities are few, perhaps this works. What happens, however, when this individual finds meaning not only through endurance sport participation, but also through his career and through a relationship with a spouse?

As humans, we seem to be hard-wired for connections – with other humans and life projects. Some time ago on her OnBeing show, radio host Krista Tippett (2016) interviewed James Martin, a Jesuit priest. Tippett asked Father Martin if he had ever fallen in love. He explained that, yes, he had at one point fallen in love with another person, but recognized that at some point you have to choose which love to pursue. For many endurance athletes, the choice is not between the priesthood, with its vows of celibacy, and married life. Rather, the two loves may be a tension between endurance sport projects or human relationships. The cyclist may desperately want to celebrate his child's birthday, but also realizes that doing so may potentially impact his mileage for the day, and this may negatively impact an upcoming race. This larger decision is important in that these choices between loves are predicated on thousands of other smaller, daily choices between significant loves: if I run for 90 minutes will that make my wife upset or should I run only 60 minutes? If I compete in a destination race (traveling significantly), which involves taking off from work, will this demonstrate a lack of commitment to co-workers and my superiors?

Practitioner Perspective: *I was tethered to the Ironman carousel, chasing the holy grail of Kona qualification but not really getting any closer to actually achieving it. Within my*

community, among my friends and colleagues, my identity was in large part shaped by my participation in triathlon over most other aspects of life. To me, it began to feel out of balance. My wife and I now had a 2-year-old daughter. My career felt like it had plateaued and I couldn't be certain that part of that plateauing wasn't due to my disproportionate focus on training and racing. I more readily noticed the way some of my acquaintances in the sport seemed unable to talk about anything but triathlon. Was that me, too? In part to force myself to change course, I enrolled in a part-time master's program in 2008, which pulled me away from serious training and racing, at least temporarily.

At what point does the self-regard and self-fulfillment required for an individual pursuit of endurance sport bleed into selfishness? Does this happen at 5 hours of training per week, 10 hours, 20 hours? It is not only the participation itself that may potentially interfere with other aspects of life, but one's mental capacity as well. Even when not running, the athlete may be contemplating upcoming races, considering adjustment of a training plan, pondering an upcoming workout potential route, or monitoring the body after an especially intense workout.

We may, at times, be willing to conduct our own private business, having the luxury of focusing on one particular project (e.g., endurance sport) without needing to attend to other responsibilities. For the twenty-something single, attending graduate school part-time, for example, this may be a perfect season of life to pursue triathlon training almost exclusively. Similar to Thoreau going to Walden Pond for a two-year period, if our other responsibilities are few, perhaps this works. What happens, however, when this individual finds meaning not only through endurance sport participation, but also through his career and through a relationship with a spouse?

As humans, we seem to be hard-wired for connections – with other humans and life projects. Some time ago on her *OnBeing* show, radio host Krista Tippett (2016) interviewed James Martin, a Jesuit priest. Tippett asked Father Martin if he had ever fallen in love. He explained that, yes, he had at one point fallen in love with another person, but recognized that at some point you have to choose which love to pursue. For many endurance athletes, the choice is not between the priesthood, with its vows of celibacy, and married life. Rather, the

two loves may be a tension between endurance sport projects or human relationships. The cyclist may desperately want to celebrate his child's birthday, but also realizes that doing so may potentially impact his mileage for the day, and this may negatively impact an upcoming race. This larger decision is important in that these choices between loves are predicated on thousands of other smaller, daily choices between significant loves: if I run for 90 minutes will that make my wife upset or should I run only 60 minutes? If I compete in a destination race (traveling significantly), which involves taking off from work, will this demonstrate a lack of commitment to co-workers and my superiors?

3.2 Shifting Nature of Commitments

Practitioner Perspective: *When I came back to the sport in 2010, as my master's program was winding down, I like to think that I did so with a new, more balanced approach. Certainly, my training hours decreased and continue to do so with each successive Ironman cycle. We now have two daughters, both of whom are pursuing activities of their own that deserve attention. My wife—a stay-at-home mother for much of my triathlon life, which created enormous scheduling flexibility—is pursuing new career opportunities. In some ways, the balancing act is more delicate than ever, but that shift has coincided with goals in the sport that are less externally driven. Certainly, it would be wonderful to qualify for Kona some day, but that pursuit no longer drives me like it once did. It would be disingenuous to say I'm in it solely for the life experiences now. I still try to prepare diligently and perform well when I choose to race, which is less than I once did. But I have also arrived at a new season where I see triathlon and endurance sport more broadly as an important part of my life—even a core part—but not my whole life.*

Searching for answers to these questions is an important part of living a good life; it is part of demonstrating commitment to the various loves in our lives and, at times, making difficult decisions between these loves. This is an ongoing process indeed as our commitments to endurance sport may shift over the years, and likewise, our commitments to other projects may shift as well. Nonetheless, it is important to keep asking the questions, and remaining attentive to these tensions in our lives, to continually monitor how our individual decisions and commitments intersect with others in our sphere of influence.

4. Broad concepts with possibilities

One way forward is to look for guidance from others with similar concerns. Those more novice endurance sport athletes, for example, may solicit advice from more experienced practitioners. Through the course of training alongside with other runners, cyclists, and swimmers, the endurance athlete increasingly becomes part of the practice community (MacIntyre, 1984). The athlete also gradually takes on the identity of an endurance athlete as she develops her craft through disciplined effort. She assimilates into this culture in pursuit of its internal values. Through this process, therefore, the athlete may seek out advice from others in the practice community, helping to discern how best to live with these potentially competing loves. Despite this, the athlete must also remain wary that any community may also become corrupt and represent negative, and even unethical, qualities of life. Some sport practice communities may condone hazing, for example, or other forms of detrimental behavior. Thus, we may face decisions and times when a particular community (e.g., a running group) may be at odds with our life goals and purpose.

While endurance sport athletes may not necessarily have easy answers in terms of these competing loves, this does not mean to say there are not possible answers and potential thumbnail rules of sorts. Broad frameworks may certainly help and the thoughts we propose below should be read as consistent with Aristotle's notion of *eudemonia* – or human flourishing. The idea here is a good life for humans includes both a sense of pursuing excellence and also a quality of satisfaction. In the section to follow we propose three broad concepts for guidance: a sense of balance; recognizing seasons of life; and the need for continual reflection and attention.

4.1 A sense of balance

Along with eudemonia, Aristotle (1996) advocated for a process of living described as the "golden mean." In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, he wrote that when navigating through these conduct of life questions, one ought to live in such a way to avoid extreme attitudes or behaviors, which may be detrimental to self and others. For example, one should live in such a way as to demonstrate courage – one of the virtues, and the mean point between extremes

such as cowardice on one end, and recklessness on the other end. As Aristotle explains, "whereas the vices either fall short of or exceed what is right in feelings and in actions, virtue ascertains and adopts the mean" (p. 41).

In many ways this notion of a golden mean comes down to balance. Discussing a pursuit of balance for endurance athletes sounds, in principle, like an achievable goal or end. But perhaps this is too easy. There is a sense in which a notion of balance, or golden mean of some sort may be a realistic goal. We might try to give approximately equal time to our training, our jobs, and our families. That said, this is not the same amount of time. For example, when we are at work we may be thinking about training or racing. This may also hold true when we are with our families.

It may be helpful to use the notion of balance to help us keep in mind the areas of our lives, which are most important. In practice, finding the sweet spot, or golden mean, for our endurance sport pursuits, or career responsibilities, and family commitments is a moving target of sorts and requires a continual monitoring process. The amount of time and energy (e.g., physiological, emotional, intellectual) one spends as a graduate student or early career employee may differ as the endurance athlete moves into and through various aspects of life. This sense of the good life, or a life conceived through a continual questioning spirit with regards to a conduct of life, entails also recognizing the notion of seasons of life, another essential component in this equation.

4.2 Seasons of life

American philosopher Henry David Thoreau moved to a small cabin beside Walden Pond on July 4, 1845, spending the next two years of his life observing his natural surroundings and writing. This was an intentional decision on his part, and one which enabled him to live in an extremely focused and dedicated manner, relatively free from societal or even personal responsibilities. While his primary focus was his own thinking and writing, he continued to reflect on and write about societal issues (e.g., slavery, technology). Upon leaving Walden after his two year experiment, Thoreau returned to life in Concord, explaining his move thusly: "I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one" (p. 459).

In the same manner, the endurance athlete may have similar seasons of life for this kind of deliberate living, mostly or perhaps even exclusively, pointed towards endurance sport goals. We find personal evidence of this notion of seasons of life. For both authors, we returned to endurance sport in our mid to late-twenties, after years spent on team sport activities. For one of us, this happened after a move to a new city replete with outdoor (and endurance sport) possibilities. Similarly, the other came back to running after a career change that entailed switching from a teaching/coaching position to a teaching/research one. In the same way, we have found certain seasons of the calendar year more conducive to heavy training and more focused efforts. One of us – a triathlete – begins the heavy training cycle in January, preparing to peak for competition in July. This means leaving house projects and other "extras" until the fall, when the competitive season starts to tail off for the year.

5. Continual reflection and attention

As we grow older (one of us in the early 40s, the other in the early 50s), we increasingly question and reflect on the nature of our endurance sport pursuits, and how this intersects with other aspects of our lives. We wonder why endurance sport is so important to us and attempt to explain this to others. We work to maintain healthy relationships with significant others as we similarly strive to pursue our athletic goals. It seems to us that this continual reflective stance towards our endurance sport pursuits with respect to our broader life is healthy and indeed essential for human flourishing.

This notion of continual reflection and attention on the transactional nature of self and others is a central theme in American philosophy – for example in the writing of Thoreau and also Henry Bugbee. Thoreau took up residence beside a small pond, living in the woods. From his cabin he observed his natural surroundings, detailing his experiences – the sights and sounds – and connected these observations with reflection on his personal life as well as societal issues. Likewise, Bugbee found personal awareness through his active pursuits. He wrote, in narrative form, of his time spent walking, rowing on a crew team, and how these experiences helped him glean his philosophical insights.

When participants recognize that their training and racing pursuits (and identity) may potentially conflict with other aspects of life, this is a healthy sign. To the extent that

someone is aware of the potential perils (e.g., marital strife, work repercussions), the individual demonstrates a sensitivity to ethical issues. In other words, the person has not developed moral callousness (Kretchmar, 2005) and is cognizant that his actions and decisions could be potentially damaging and create harm to self and others. As Appiah (2007) emphasizes, we need to continually recognize the importance of other people's projects. While we may be extremely committed to endurance sport goals, our co-workers may be similarly devoted to reading, gardening, volunteer work, graduate studies, and so forth. Indeed, our endurance sport goals and ambitions are vitally important (to us), but so are the projects of our spouses, our children, our neighbors, and our colleagues at work.

For the endurance athlete attune to these questions and potential issues, this is an ongoing process of decision-making – how much to train, which races (or not) to enter, how best to adjust training and racing goals to family and/or work responsibilities and opportunities. Some address these issues by trying to discern how best to dovetail fitness goals with family and/or work. This might include practical strategies such as finding a job conducive to training and/or racing (e.g., flexible hours, understanding boss and colleagues); or combining race opportunities with family vacations, or working out with family members.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, without a doubt striving towards personal goals related to endurance sport is a challenging endeavor. The attainment of excellence in endurance sport, and other human projects as well, is not without certain sacrifices and a substantial time commitment. To engage in such pursuits without committing harm to self or others is fraught with difficulty.

One potential strategy is to view this challenge as just that – a challenge. In the same way the runner devises training plans to meet the challenges of marathon racing goals, she can similarly devise tactics for balancing her running training and racing life with family and/or work responsibilities and relationships. These efforts and potential accomplishments may even bring about a certain sense of satisfaction in meeting the various responsibilities and commitments in a healthy manner.

As runners, cyclists, swimmers and triathletes ponder these questions throughout the

course of their competitive lives, the activities themselves may provide an opportunity to continually reflect on and meet these issues. Endurance sport (and movement in general) provides not only physiological benefits but also provides opportunity for a meditative space of sorts, a time and place apart from the normal routine of everyday life and work. In this place, endurance sport allows for personal reflection and attention, a kind of thinking Anderson (in press) refers to as "musement." It is here that the run itself, for example, enables thoughts to rise to a conscious level, insights which may have remained dormant without this specific form of movement. Thoreau advocated for a special type of walking – sauntering – which he referred to as going "to the Holy Land" (p. 557). Rather than approach walking as a form of exercise, as one takes medicine, Thoreau sought to use walking as a means to experience his surroundings, and provide him with the mental space and time for the rumination he needed as a scholar. For the endurance sport athletes, some "workouts" may lend themselves to this kind of musement-enhanced, meditative atmosphere. In those times the athlete may be in a better position to reflect on those questions related to conduct of life, and continually work to make decisions conducive to human flourishing.

Bibliography

Anderson, D. & Lally, R. (2004). Endurance sport. *Streams of William James*, 6 (2), 17-21.

Anderson, D. (in press). Running and musing: Living philosophically. In Hochstetler, D. (Ed.), *Endurance sport and the American philosophical tradition*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Appiah, K. (2007). *The ethics of identity.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Aristotle (1996). *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions.

Bugbee, H. *The inward morning.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Emerson, R. (1981). T*he portable Emerson.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Helliker, Kevin. Wall Street Journal, Eastern edition; New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y] 01 Feb 2011: D.1.

Hopsicker, P. & Hochstetler, D. (2014). "Finding the "Me" in endurance sports: An apology for runners and joggers, cyclists and riders. *Kinesiology Review* 3, 161-171.

James, W. (1956). *The will to believe*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

Jonas, S. (2008). "What's in an attitude towards regular exercise?" *American Medical Athletic Association Journal Journal,* 21(3), 4-5.

Kretchmar, R. S. (2005). *Practical philosophy of sport.* Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Kretchmar, R. S. (2008). *"Gaming up life: Considerations for game expansions".* Journal of the Philosophy of Sport, 35, 142-155.

MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After virtue*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

McDermott, J. (2007). *The drama of possibility.* New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

Thoreau, H. (2012). *The portable Thoreau*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics.

Tippett, K. (2016). Finding God in all things. URL: https://onbeing.org/programs/james-martin-finding-god-in-all-things-2/