



## Mains Practice Question

### Case Study

You are the head coach of a state football team preparing for the National Cup finals. Two days before the final match, you witness your star striker, who is crucial to the team's strategy and morale, using a performance-enhancing drug. This drug is undetectable by current testing methods. On confronting him, he expresses deep remorse and begs you not to report him, as it would end his career and possibly result in stripping the team of all their tournament victories.

As you grapple with this revelation, you realize the magnitude of your decision. Playing him risks the integrity of the sport and your personal ethics, but benching or reporting him could cost your nation its first-ever National Cup title. The hopes of fans rest on this match, and the economic impact of winning would be significant for your state. You must decide quickly whether to play him, bench him with a cover story, or report the violation to the authorities, knowing each choice carries profound consequences for the player, the team, and the sport itself.

1. What are the ethical dilemmas involved in this situation?
2. As the head coach, what would be your immediate course of action and why?
3. How can the current system of monitoring and preventing the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sports be improved to address situations like this in the future?

26 Jul, 2024 GS Paper 4 Case Studies

### Introduction:

This case study presents a moral dilemma faced by a football coach on the brink of a national championship.

- The discovery of his **star player's undisclosed use of performance-enhancing drugs** forces the coach to make a critical decision with far-reaching consequences.
- The choice between upholding the integrity of the sport and pursuing victory highlights the complex ethical challenges in competitive athletics.

### Body:

#### 1. What are the ethical dilemmas involved in this situation?

- **Integrity vs. Success:** The core dilemma is **whether to prioritize the integrity** of the sport and personal ethics over the **potential success** and benefits of **winning the National Cup**.
- **Utilitarianism vs. Deontological Ethics:** The dilemma touches on whether to make a decision based on the **greatest good for the greatest number (utilitarian approach)** or based on **absolute moral principles (deontological approach)**.
- **Short-term vs. Long-term Consequences:** The decision involves weighing immediate benefits (winning the cup) against long-term implications for the **sport's credibility and the coach's personal reputation**.

- **Truth vs. Deception:** Choosing to play the striker or bench him with a cover story involves deceiving officials, fans, and possibly team members.
- **Rule of Law vs. Situational Ethics:** There's a tension between strictly adhering to the rules of the sport and considering the unique circumstances of this situation.
- **Punishment vs. Redemption:** There's a question of whether the player deserves a chance at **redemption** or should face the consequences of his actions.

2. As the head coach, what would be your immediate course of action and why?

As the head coach in this scenario, I would approach this complex ethical dilemma with a thorough analysis of the options and their consequences.

- **Play the Striker:**
  - **Pros:**
    - Maintains team morale and strategic cohesion
    - Enhances chances of winning the National Cup
    - Brings economic benefits to the state
    - Satisfies fan expectations and support
  - **Cons:**
    - Compromises **personal and professional integrity**
    - Violates the **spirit of fair play and sportsmanship**
    - Risks severe future consequences if the drug use is discovered
    - Sets a **dangerous precedent** for other players regarding drug use
- **Bench the Striker with a Cover Story:**
  - **Pros:**
    - Preserves a **level of integrity** without full disclosure
    - **Avoids immediate scandal** and protects the player's career
  - **Cons:**
    - **Weakens the team's chances** of winning
    - Creates potential for speculation and rumors
    - Places the coach in a position of deceit and covering up misconduct
- **Report the Violation to Authorities:**
  - **Pros:**
    - Upholds the **integrity of the sport**
    - Sets a **clear ethical standard** for the team and sport
    - Potentially prevents future drug use by other players
  - **Cons:**
    - Likely leads to team disqualification and loss of previous victories
    - Ends the player's career
    - Disappoints fans and negatively impacts the state economy
    - May create a **scandal that overshadows the tournament**

After careful consideration, my immediate course of action would be to bench the striker with a cover story, while simultaneously initiating a confidential report to the relevant authorities.

- The cover story for benching the player could involve a **sudden illness or minor injury**.
- This allows time for the proper authorities to investigate and **make informed decisions about consequences for the player and team**.

#### **Rationale for this Decision:**

- **Ethical Integrity:** By not playing the striker, I maintain a **degree of ethical integrity** without immediately jeopardizing the entire team's efforts.
- **Fair Competition:** Benching the player ensures that the **final match is played without the unfair advantage** of a doping athlete.
- **Balancing Consequences:** This approach attempts to balance the immediate consequences (disqualification of team) with long-term ethical considerations.
- **Due Process:** By reporting to the authorities confidentially, I ensure that proper **procedures are followed**, and the issue is addressed by the appropriate governing bodies.

- **Future Deterrence:** By addressing the issue, **albeit not publicly at first**, it sends a message that drug use will not be tolerated, potentially deterring future incidents.

3. How can the current system of monitoring and preventing the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sports be improved to address situations like this in the future?

Improving the current system of monitoring ( **urine samples and fingernail or hair testing**) and preventing the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sports requires a multifaceted approach:

- **Advanced Testing Methods:** Invest in research to develop more sophisticated detection techniques that can **identify a wider range of substances**, including currently undetectable drugs.
  - Implement **more frequent and randomized testing schedules** to increase the likelihood of catching offenders.
- **Biological Passport System:** Expand and refine the use of **biological passports**, which track an athlete's biological markers over time to detect abnormalities that might indicate doping.
  - Make this system mandatory across **big sports leagues**.
- **Stricter Penalties:** Implement harsher penalties for dopers, including longer bans and **financial repercussions**.
  - Extend consequences to **coaches, medical staff, and others** who enable or encourage doping.
- **Improved Education and Prevention:** Enhance anti-doping education programs for athletes, starting at younger ages and continuing throughout their careers.
  - **Provide better resources for athletes** to understand the risks and consequences of doping.
- **Whistleblower Protection and Incentives:** Establish robust whistleblower protection programs to encourage reporting of doping activities.
  - **Offer reduced penalties for athletes who come forward** with information about widespread doping practices.
- **Addressing Root Causes:** Work to change the culture in sports that **often prioritizes winning at all costs**.
  - Address economic pressures that may drive athletes to dope by **ensuring fair compensation and support systems**.
  - Provide mental health resources to athletes to address underlying issues that might lead to doping, such as **pressure, anxiety, or depression**.
- **Independent Oversight:** Establish truly independent **anti-doping bodies** to avoid conflicts of interest with sports organizations.
  - Increase transparency in the testing and sanctioning processes.

## Conclusion:

The decision to uphold the integrity of the sport is paramount, even at the cost of immediate success. While benching the player is a difficult choice, it prioritizes fair play. To prevent such dilemmas, sports need robust, independent anti-doping agencies, advanced detection methods, and a strong culture of ethical sportsmanship.