

Year 12

English

Unit 2

Sport



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Philippians 3:14

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

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Sport with Purpose

In art there is a tendency to worship the artifact, as we see in accounts of idol worship in the Bible. In politics we see people worship Pharaoh or Caesar or whoever presents as the modern messiah. In music the artist can be called a pop “idol” and fans worship the performer. Sport can take on a religious hold too, and become a substitute faith and diversion. A club or excellent athlete can be venerated to a level which is spiritually unsound. The presence of sports club logos in newspaper death notices and club memorabilia at memorial services for the deceased shows how individuals gain meaning and significance from their sports “tribe”.

God is a Player

Does God play? Did God put in us the propensity to play? Innocent children play and lose themselves in games. Jesus commended the children to us for their childlike faith. God is the creator of all things, His creative acts include sport. He made us with the urge to play, create games with strategies and rules and targets. God has made some of us with excellent and striking sporting gifts. It is for those blessed with these gifts to bring glory to Him. Artists use their gifts with proficiency, as do musicians, writers and surgeons. People in sport, and sports professionals who are Christians, do likewise.

Standards

We are to enter sport with the standards of Christ. This means we play hard, with love and integrity. We are honest and serve our team’s interests above our own. We treat the opposition with respect during the game as well as in off the court/field encounters. God made us to enjoy relationships, and special relationships are forged in sports games and also in the sports club worlds.

Paul in his epistles drew upon the sports of the ancient world for the purpose of spiritual analogy. If he was against sport, he would not have made such references. These references alone are not seen as being a justification for the playing sport. See 1 Cor 9:24-27, Gal 2:2 and 5:7, Phil 2:16, 3:13, 14 and 1Tim 4:8, 2 Tim 2:5, 4:7 and Heb 12:1, 2

The movie *Chariots of Fire* has the protagonist, Eric Liddell, who say, “God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast and when I run, I feel his pleasure”. After his Olympic win Liddell gave up most of his sport for missions as did C. T Studd his brilliant cricket career. But the two are not exclusive. There are many great athletes who live lives of faith out of a sporting career.

Win at *any* cost?

Competition is a basic and essential ingredient of sport. One needs to play to beat the competitor or competing team to gain pleasure in the game. And even when playing alone, one strives to beat prior attainment levels. Competition enhances the emotional intensity of the game. We “love” our competitor by playing hard; this provides both them and us with a maximum experience.

God gave us sport:

- a) to help grow relationships
- b) to keep fit in an enjoyable way
- c) for refreshment from work
- d) for psychological release and gratification
- e) to provide a popular arena for evangelism.
- f) for wholesome pleasure
- g) as a means of shaping character and self-discipline.



Handicapped people can find wonderful joy and release in sports activities and competition. The Paralympics began Rome in 1960. Today, the Paralympics are elite sport events for athletes with a disability. They emphasize, however, the participants' athletic achievements rather than their disability. Very old people can touch some of the pleasure of childhood again in sporting games appropriate to their fitness level. It is a heresy of old that the body is evil and the spirit good, Jesus occupied a body, and our bodies will be resurrected. The very physical nature of sport is not grounds for downgrading its worth. Perhaps we will continue to play sporting games in heaven. The treasures of the nations will go into the New Jerusalem; will not wholesome and engaging sporting pursuits be among these? Rev 21:24-26.



The world perverts sport as it does other gifts from God, like music, art and sex. Our task is to keep sport in its rightful place, which is not the centre of living, a place sacred to God. Winning a competition can become an unhealthy obsession, by making a game and or a team or particular player exalted; we make it an absolute and idol. This robs us of much of the pleasure - for such gods will certainly fail us. Idolatry brings death in its wake. It ruins sport and takes away the intended pleasure. When we play sport well, and keep the games to their right proportion and realm in our living, we allow the gift of sporting pursuits to conform correctly to God's created design. We model to unbelievers how to maximize joy from the gift without becoming possessed by it and the spirit of this age, which sits behind it in a predatory way. God gave us sport as a gift and fashioned our minds and hearts to create and enjoy games. It is no substitute for church or a life lived out bearing the fruit of the Spirit. But it is an enterprise which can facilitate healthy Christian living.

Team chaplains

Many of the major professional sports teams have access to chaplains. They are important forces for maintaining balance and integrity in the teams. So let's run the race of life before us with vigor as the author of Hebrews wrote 2000 years ago. The advice is still sound today. Let's seek victory in the glorious contest against sin and the spirit of this age, let's be counter cultural and put sport in its God appointed place. Heb 12:1

References:

Goheen M *Delighting in God's Good Gift of Sports and Competition*. In Edlin R and Ireland J Engaging The Culture National Institute For Christian Education Blacktown Australia 2006

<http://www.fcagear.com/> Fellowship of Christian Athletes

<http://www.aiagear.com/> Athletes In Action

<http://www.veritesport.org/> Excellent site with articles and sport devotions for Christians

<http://uksportsministries.org/>

Activities

1. Read the Bible verses about sport written by Paul, (see paragraph 4). Choose three verses and explain why these are important to you.
2. Read the following excerpts of this article from the Wall Street Times in the USA. Why the reporter S Bailey saying faith is often not reported when it's an integral part of an elite athlete's life?

Sports journalists are reluctant to tackle faith on the field. FEBRUARY 4, 2010

By Sarah Pulliam Bailey

Tim Tebow may steal the Super Bowl spotlight by appearing in an antiabortion TV commercial with his mother, Pam, on Sunday night, but his faith is kept on the sidelines. Most reporters writing about the ad neglected to say that his mother's faith was the reason she did not abort him when doctors warned he could be born severely disabled in 1987. Perhaps the sportswriters assumed that most people know about the family's Christian beliefs. The former quarterback for the Florida Gators paints Bible verses under his eyes and is vocal about saving himself for marriage. Or perhaps writers, for a variety of reasons, are just uncomfortable exploring religion's impact on an athlete. Faith is the belief in things unseen. Sportswriters are trained to write about the observable. "One of the problems that we have is determining the veracity of a person's claim that he has just won this game for his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," Mr. King said.

But "if that's something the player cites as a motivating factor, I don't think you're telling the full story if you don't explore that angle a little bit."

Reporters might also be apprehensive about giving an athlete a platform to espouse his beliefs. "When athletes give their testimonies in interviews, there's impatience, sometimes an outright hostility to religion, because they feel like an athlete is pushing religion on people," says Shirl James Hoffman, author of "Good Game: Christianity and the Culture of Sports." "Sportswriters who write on Christian athletes might be generally sympathetic to the moral life that they present off the field. When an athlete says anything that hits on their faith as the only way to salvation, now you're in real trouble."

More recently, reporters have found it hard to ignore Jesus-professing athletes like the quarterback Kurt Warner, who retired on Jan. 29. Mr. Warner, who went from stocking shelves at a grocery store to winning two MVPs, is outspoken about his faith. When a reporter attempts to separate the high-caliber athletes from average ones, they begin to look for some intangible qualities, and faith is sometimes a part of that. "There is dishonesty in telling his story if you ignore what drives him, especially if you accept its role in one of the NFL's great success stories," the Arizona Republic's Paola Boivin wrote before last year's Super Bowl.

Sports journalism often lends itself to lengthy profile-driven features. Sportswriters have some of the best opportunities to tell human-interest stories, and in some cases that

means connecting the religious dots for people. But when you look closer into what it means to be religious, it usually involves divisive opinions on matters like heaven and hell, and, in some cases, abortion.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704022804575041131978769078.html>
reference for the complete article



3. Read and write your response to the following sequence of quotes from *US Today* national magazine, 6.12.2011.

"We've had athletes being very vocal about their faith and using their status as athletes to promote their faith for a long time now," said Tom Krattenmaker, author of *Onward Christian Athletes: Turning Ballparks into Pulpits and Players into Preachers*.

"This dates back to World War 2 when you saw organizations that were all about using the popularity of big-time spectator sports as a platform for promoting the faith. The *Fellowship of Christian Athletes* goes back to the '50s. But Tebow seems to have taken it to an extra level of intensity."

Tebow doesn't have a monopoly on sharing his faith through the spotlight sports brings. Free agent first baseman Albert Pujols points skyward with both index fingers when he crosses home plate. All-Star Oklahoma City forward Kevin Durant has been spotted reading the Bible at his locker before games. Florida Panthers 2011 second-round draft pick Rocco Grimaldi tweets Bible verses. An invocation is given before the "Gentlemen, start your engines!" command at many motor sports events, including NASCAR.

"I often think about the same thing," said Patton Dodd, managing editor at *Patheos*, a website that is dedicated to religion and spirituality, and author of *The Tebow Mystique*. "I often think about Troy Polamalu, who you will hear *Pittsburgh Steelers* players say is the most religious athlete in football. He crosses himself before every play and sometimes after. He prays during plays. It is odd that there are more outspoken Christians on the Denver Broncos like Brian Dawkins. It is odd that Tebow has become this figure."

Adds James: "All we do is complain about how we don't have any positive role models in sports for young kids and specifically young males. It's all Pacman Jones, Ben Roethlisberger, or Tiger Woods. The list goes on and on.

"Tebow isn't evangelizing from the huddle, he doesn't go on TV and try to convert people to Christianity; he plays football and holds a prayer circle after the game ... If him taking a knee and thanking God after a win offends your sensibilities or upsets you, you don't have to watch."

"There are so many biblical metaphors used in the sports world that it is just a natural conversation," says High.

Reference: <http://www.usatoday.com/sports/story/2011-11-29/broncos-qb-tebow-stirs-debate-on-religion-and-sports/51663956/1>

4. Read this quotation of Ryan Hall one of the most famous Olympian runners in the USA:

" From my experience through my running career of weathering many lows and enjoying some really high mountain peak experiences, I have felt that the sweetest part of running is feeling God with me as I run, and the great thing about that is it isn't something that only one person or a couple of people can experience in a race. We can all experience it. We can all feel something that is even sweeter, available every time we toe the line and more lasting than winning or setting a record. Today, whenever I sign my name to an autograph I always write John 10:10 with it because it is the best part of following Jesus and having his Spirit in me – it makes life sweeter. My running is better; my daily life is better, etc. Following Jesus doesn't mean abandoning the fun things of this world; it means having more fun, being free from the worries of daily life, and experiencing things in greater, more fulfilling ways.

With that said, I can't deny that sometimes God does choose to come to the aid of maybe just one in a race allowing him/her to break free of physical limitations. One of my favorite stories in the Bible is the story of Elijah outrunning a chariot to Jezreel (a distance over a marathon...I'm pretty sure he ran faster than any of us elites are running today). Sometimes God does give supernatural strength. Knowing that God does move in this way is what makes going to the starting line such a thrilling experience for me. I believe with all my heart God can do something miraculous through me. While I cannot coerce God into moving in this way I still have childlike faith knowing it's possible, which I reflect in my running by being bold, taking chances and giving God an opportunity to do something amazing. However, I have found from my experience that often times what I hear God telling me is, "My grace is sufficient for you (2 Corinthians 12:9)." God has always provided enough strength for me to do what He wants me to do on the race course. It doesn't mean I always win or do something miraculous but I always have enough to accomplish the purpose which God called me to race for."

5. God doesn't make Christian sports men and women win and excel every time, so what is the attraction of Jesus to athletes?

6. Would you agree with the following comments of Ryan Hall about Jesus being a potential athlete, if He was in your suburb/village now? Give reason.

"I believe that the Bible is the best sports psychology book out there and that Jesus would have been an amazing athlete. My reasoning being that the Bible unlocks the perfect heart

for athletes to compete from. The most important thing I can train is my heart. It is what drives the body. Christians should be able to compete with more freedom, less pressure and more joy. I have become better at being OK with whatever God has for me in a race knowing that at the end of the day, though I try to wrap my head around how God moves in sport, in the end, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9)."

7. Write a comment of encouragement for Ryan Hall's *Facebook* wall. He ran for the USA in the Beijing Olympics and is to run the London Olympic marathon for his country.

8. Ancient Jewish athletes did not take part in the original Olympics because of pagan religious practices, including nudity. Today some Christians are still wary of the event because they see it being an event with residual pagan religious tones. Explain their objections. What would be the response that Christian athletes like Ryan Hall might make to answer this anti Olympics position?

9. Watch the DVD *Chariots of Fire* which won lots of Academy awards. Comment on the disgrace and controversy that Eric Lidell caused by his decision not to run. Should all church and Christian school owned sports facilities be shut on Sundays? Why/why not?

10. Use a mind map to list key facts about the Paralympics Games that you find from research. Comment on this poster.



11. Look at some of the Nike and Adidas advertisements on YouTube. Are they promising the impossible or promoting responsible healthy living? Give your reasons.

Biography: Eric Liddell

1902-1945

Eric Liddell ran the race for Christ, sacrificing fame, fortune, and even his own life.

Eric Liddell is often remembered as a Christian Olympian, famously portrayed in the film *Chariots of Fire*. A gifted athlete, Liddell made headlines when he refused to compete in his best event at the 1924 Paris Olympics because it was scheduled on a Sunday. But although his athletic accomplishments brought him international fame, Liddell's true legacy extends far beyond the track. He served as a missionary to China during the war, spending his final years in an internment camp and suffering for the sake of the gospel. Liddell's life was marked by conviction, sacrifice, and unwavering devotion to Christ. His story reminds us to run the race set out for us with quiet, faithful obedience to the Lord.

Early Years: A Need for Speed

Eric Liddell was born on January 16, 1902, in Tianjin, China to Scottish missionary parents. When he was six years old, Liddell and his brother were sent to a boarding school in England, while their parents and sister continued their ministry in China.

At Eltham College, Liddell quickly distinguished himself as a remarkable athlete. He became captain of the rugby team and won the prestigious Blackheath Cup. He later joined his brother at the University of Edinburgh, where he became known as the fastest runner in Scotland. Liddell soon dominated the national scene, winning the 100m and 200m, and breaking the British record in the 100m. As the Olympics approached, newspapers began buzzing with predictions about his success.

Olympic Glory

In 1924, Liddell qualified for the Paris Olympics. However, when he learned that the 100m heats were scheduled on a Sunday, he refused to compete. Liddell held the deep conviction that Sunday was the Lord's Day and should be set apart for worship and rest. Though his decision drew great international backlash, Liddell stood firm in his convictions.

Instead, Liddell decided to focus on the 200m and 400m events. In the 200m, Liddell came in third, earning a bronze medal. On the morning of the 400m finals, a team staff member handed Liddell a piece of paper that said: "In the old book it says: 'He that honours me I will honour.' Wishing you the best of success always." Deeply encouraged, Liddell stepped on the track with great confidence.

His strategy was simple: "I run the first 200 meters as fast as I can. Then, with God's help, I run the second 200 meters even faster." That day, Liddell ran the race of his life, winning the gold medal and breaking the world record. His victory became an international symbol of faith and courage, and he used his platform to share the gospel worldwide.

Returning to China

Despite his fame, Liddell did not bask in the limelight. Though he was offered global fame and comfort, Liddell understood that his life was not his own—he was a servant of Christ, and his goal was to make the gospel known to the ends of the earth.

In 1925, Liddell returned to China to become a missionary. He began teaching at a Chinese-English school for wealthy children. While there, Liddell also used his athletic gifts to train students and assisted his father in ministry within the local church. He spent years living with gospel intentionality—visiting the poor, discipling believers, and sharing the gospel with students and adults alike. In 1934, Liddell married Florence Mackenzie, the daughter of Canadian missionaries. Together, they had three daughters.

When the Japanese invasion intensified, China became increasingly dangerous. In 1941, Liddell sent his wife and daughters to Canada for safety, choosing to remain behind and minister in war-torn regions. He later moved to Xiaozhang, where he cared for the sick and preached the gospel wherever he could.

In 1943, Japanese forces captured the mission station where Liddell was stationed, and he was placed in an internment camp. Conditions at the camp were harsh. Food was scarce, and medical care was limited. Yet even under duress, Liddell remained faithful. He organized Bible classes, taught children, refereed sports events, and settled disputes. His kind and gentle demeanour earned him the title “Uncle Eric.”

Despite being malnourished and overworked, Liddell maintained a joyful attitude and never spoke ill of others. On February 21, 1945, just five months before the camp was liberated, he died from a brain tumour at the age of 43. Many believe that the malnutrition and stress of the camp contributed to his deteriorating health.

Liddell's Legacy

Even in his final days, Liddell remained faithful to the Lord. He ran the race with endurance, laying aside every weight to follow Christ (Hebrews 12:1-3). He poured out his life daily to make Christ known among the Chinese, choosing sacrifice over comfort, obedience over opportunity, and eternity over earthly success.

Liddell's athletic accomplishments continue to be honoured to this day. He was inducted into the Scottish Sports Hall of Fame in 2002 and the Scottish Rugby Hall of Fame in 2022. Yet far more significant than his medals or accolades is his testimony—a man who ran the race of faith with perseverance, pressing on toward the prize of knowing Christ and making Him known. His story challenges us to live with the same gospel-motivated ambition, laying aside every hindrance to bring the good news to those who have never heard.

Liddell's life was marked by conviction, sacrifice, and unwavering devotion to Christ. His story reminds us to run the race set out for us with quiet, faithful obedience to the Lord.



Activities

1. Make a summary of Eric Liddell's life story.
2. Choose three facts about his life that challenge us as Christians.
3. What Scripture verse from Phillipians Chapter 3 would be a good motto for his life?
4. How would you describe Erric Liddell's character?

Fiji's Olympic Medals

Fiji made its debut at the 1956 Summer Olympics. Since then, the nation has competed at 16 Summer Olympic Games and 3 Winter Olympic Games. Its athletes have taken part in archery, athletics, boxing, football, judo, sailing, shooting, swimming, weightlifting and rugby sevens.

Fiji has won four Olympic medals, three in men's rugby sevens, and one in women's rugby sevens. Olympics rugby was first contested in 2016 and the Fiji men's team is the most successful of any country, winning gold in 2016 and 2020, and silver in 2024. The women's team won bronze in 2020.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiji_at_the_Olympics

Questions and Activities

1. Why is sport so important to Fiji?
2. Make a table to show all the Olympic medals that have been won by Fiji, including the years of winning the medals.
3. When the rugby team won Gold in 2020 the team made a public declaration of faith by praising God for their win. Comment on the importance of being a witness for Christ to the world, including good conduct.
4. How can Fiji prepare athletes for the Olympics in the future? Do you see that funding for youth sports activities as being important? What role can schools play in preparing outstanding sports people for the nation?





The Official Mascots



Mascots are used at the FIFA World Cup to make the tournament more fun, friendly, and memorable. They help create excitement before and during the competition, especially for children and families.

Each mascot usually represents something important about the host country, such as an animal, a cultural symbol, or a famous tradition. This helps visitors learn more about the country and its culture.

Mascots also promote positive values like friendship, respect, teamwork, and fair play. They appear at opening ceremonies, matches, fan festivals, schools, and community events. They take photos with fans, entertain crowds, and help create a festive atmosphere.

The FIFA World Cup 2026 is special because it is being hosted by three countries: Canada, Mexico, and the United States. For the first time in World Cup history, there are three official mascots, one for each host country.

The mascots are Maple the Moose, Zayu the Jaguar, and Clutch the Bald Eagle.

Maple the Moose represents Canada. A moose is one of Canada's most famous animals.

Maple is creative, confident, and loves art and music. In the mascot team, Maple plays as a goalkeeper and is known for making great saves.

Zayu the Jaguar represents Mexico. Jaguars are important animals in Mexican history and culture. Zayu is energetic, brave, and proud of Mexican traditions. On the football field, Zayu is the striker who loves scoring goals.

Clutch the Bald Eagle represents the United States. The bald eagle is a national symbol of the country. Clutch is adventurous, curious, and enjoys helping teammates. Clutch plays in midfield and encourages teamwork and fair play.

Fans around the world have welcomed the three mascots. They appear at matches, celebrations, and events, helping to create a fun atmosphere for children and adults. The mascots remind everyone that football brings people together, no matter where they come from.

Activities

Match the words with their meanings.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Mascot | a. People from different backgrounds |
| 2. Goalkeeper | b. A symbol of a team or event |
| 3. Striker | c. A person who protects the goal |
| 4. Diversity | d. A player who scores goals |

True or False

1. The 2026 World Cup has only one mascot.
2. Maple is a moose.
3. Zayu represents the United States.
4. Clutch is a bald eagle.
5. Zayu plays as a striker.
6. The mascots promote friendship and diversity.

Answer the questions

1. Why are there three official mascots at the 2026 World Cup?
2. Which mascot represents Canada?
3. What animal is Zayu?
4. Which mascot represents the United States?
5. What position does Maple play?
6. What position does Zayu play?
7. What qualities describe Clutch?
8. What do the mascots symbolize?
9. Do you think mascots are important? Why?
10. Which mascot do you like the most? Why?
11. If your country had a World Cup mascot, what animal would it be?
12. Do mascots make sports events more fun?
13. Which host country would you like to visit?
14. What qualities should a good mascot have?

The ball's journey to the World Cup

Have you ever wondered where a World Cup football comes from? Every ball has an exciting journey before it gets to the court.

The story begins in a factory. The workers make the ball from different materials. They check whether it is round, stable and safe. Each ball must pass several tests before it can be used in a match.

After that, the balls are packed into boxes and sent to different countries. They travel by truck, ship or plane. Sometimes they travel thousands of kilometers before they reach their destination.

When the balls arrive at the World Cup, the officials inspect them again. They ensure that each ball is the right size, weight, and shape. The balls are then delivered to the stadiums where the matches are played.

Before each game, the players train with the official match balls. They want to familiarize themselves with how the ball moves through the air and across the grass.

Finally, the big day is coming. Thousands of fans fill the stadium, and millions of people watch on TV. The referee places the ball in the middle of the pitch and blows the whistle. The ball is kicked for the first time and the game begins.

Some balls become part of football history. They are used in important matches, score famous goals and help teams win championships. What an amazing journey for a simple football!

Connect the words with their meanings.

1. Factory	a. look at something carefully
2. Inspection	b. a place where things are made
3. Objective	c. a small instrument that produces a loud sound
4. Stadium	d. The place where someone or something goes
5. Whistle	e. a sports field

True or false?

1. The balls are manufactured in a factory.
2. The balls only travel by plane.
3. The balls are inspected at the World Cup.
4. The players never train with the official match balls.
5. The referee places the ball in the middle of the field before the start of the game.

Answer the questions

1. Where does the ball's journey begin?
2. What do the workers check before the ball leaves the factory?
3. How do the balls travel to different countries?
4. Who inspects the balls when they arrive at the World Cup?
5. Why do players train with the official match balls?
6. Where does the referee place the ball before the game starts?
7. How many people watch the games?
8. What can make a ball a part of football history?

Head injuries in contact sports

Article 1

Brain injuries caused by repeated head injuries

Thirty-three Australian Rules players, including 19 professional and semi-professional footballers, have been diagnosed with the degenerative brain disease chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), exposing the scale of the AFL's brain trauma crisis.

Alarming findings, compiled by the Australian Sports Brain Bank, report that some high-profile players died in their 20s, 30s and 40s.

CTE is caused by repeated hits to the head and can only be diagnosed after death.

In life, the disease has been associated with symptoms including depression, memory loss, rage, poor impulse control and suicidal thoughts.

Nineteen of the Australian Rules brain donors to the brain bank died by suicide. Fifteen had CTE, four did not.

Concussion is the second most common injury in the AFL, and the league has implemented more than 30 rule changes to reduce the risk of head knocks over the past decade.

But a concussion alone does not cause CTE in players.

"What drives CTE risk is exposure to repeated head impacts," Dr Buckland said.

"Most of those won't give you any signs or symptoms; they will just be part of the rough and tumble of the game, but each one of those is doing microscopic damage."

"The concussion protocols do not protect against CTE," he said.

"CTE and other neurodegenerative diseases like motor neurone disease and dementia are due to what we call sub-concussive impacts. These are things like bumps, tackles, being thrown to the ground, getting back up, running on with no apparent signs or symptoms.

"These are the small impacts that come into the tens of thousands over a player's career, from when they start through to when they retire."

"For those people to be able to protect themselves at that moment, it's just not possible."

"There is a huge danger to these contact sports that involve head impacts and that's not restricted to American football or Australian Rules football, it's also seen in rugby and ice hockey and even soccer.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-01/luke-ivens-brain-injury-concussion-football/104513970>

Article 2

Football and Brain Injuries: What You Need to Know

By Alex Pew and Danielle Shapiro, MD, MPH, National Center for Health Research

The dangers of professional football is a hot topic. Studies have found high rates of concussions, traumatic brain injuries, and a serious brain disorder called chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in former players. These injuries can have terribly debilitating effects. For the 2017-2018 football season, the NFL changed certain rules to make play safer, but how effective have the rule changes been? And what are the implications for children, teenagers, and college students who play football?

What is a Concussion?

Concussions occur when a collision causes the brain to hit the inside of the skull. The greater the force of the impact, the more severe the concussion. Symptoms can include disorientation, memory problems, headaches, fogginess, and loss of consciousness. After suffering from one concussion, a person (especially an athlete) is much more likely to suffer from a second one after another injury. A second concussion often comes with symptoms that last longer than the first. Studies show that having more than one concussion can cause depression, anxiety, aggression, personality changes, and an increased risk of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, CTE, and other brain disorders.

How Can You Prevent a Concussion?

Sports will always have risks, but there are many ways to prevent serious concussions. Helmets and mouth guards are widely used but there is no evidence that they help prevent concussions. In contrast, there is convincing evidence that reducing or eliminating tackling in rough sports like hockey and football will help prevent concussions.

What is CTE?

CTE is a brain disorder that is caused by repeated head injuries. These brain changes progress and worsen over time, and may not be noticed for months, years, or decades after the last brain injury. Common symptoms include memory loss, impaired judgment, aggression, and depression. Some of former athletes with CTE have committed suicide or murder. CTE is most often found in athletes who have experienced repeated head injuries, such as former boxers, hockey players, and football players.

What About Children and Teens Who Play Football?

Researchers at Virginia Tech found that football risks start at an early age. Their study found that young children take high-force hits to the head. The researchers observed 9 to 12-year-old players and found that about 8% of head impacts were high-magnitude, defined as greater than 40 times the force of gravity. These impacts were more likely to occur in

competitive games rather than during practices. Quarterbacks, running backs, and linebackers were all at greater risk. These findings confirm parents' concerns about the risks of playing football at a young age.

Another study found that dangers are much greater when players start before the age of 12, because they are twice as likely to develop mood and behaviour problems later in life. For several years, researchers have been warning about the health risks of football, especially for children, and as a result participation in tackle football for 6 to 12 year-olds has dropped by almost 20% since 2009. In response, USA Football introduced a new version of football called "rookie tackle," which aims to decrease the physical toll on young children. Even with this safer version of the game, however, researchers and parents still don't know if children are safe enough.

<https://www.center4research.org/football-brain-injuries-need-know/>

1. What does CTE stand for?
2. What is the difference between CTE and concussion?
3. What causes CTE?
4. What are the effects of CTE?
5. Summarize the results of the 19 Australian Rules players who donated their brains for research after their death.
6. What is your opinion of using helmets in football? Outline the advantages and disadvantages.
7. What does the second article suggest as a way of reducing head injuries in contact sports?
8. What are the risks to children and teens?
9. What do you suggest for increasing safety in contact sports and avoiding head injuries?

The Paralympics

The Paralympic Games or Paralympics is a periodic series of international multisport events involving athletes with a range of disabilities. There are Winter and Summer Paralympic Games, which since the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, have been held shortly after the corresponding Olympic Games. All Paralympic Games are governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

The Paralympics began as a small gathering of British World War II veterans in 1948. The 1960 Games in Rome drew 400 athletes with disabilities from 23 countries, as proposed by doctor Antonio Maglio. Currently it is one of the largest international sporting events: the 2020 Summer Paralympics featuring 4,520 athletes from 163 National Paralympic Committees.

Given the wide variety of disabilities of Para athletes, there are several categories in which they compete. The allowable disabilities are divided into ten eligible impairment types: impaired muscle power, impaired passive range of movement, limb deficiency, leg length difference, short stature, hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis, vision impairment and intellectual impairment.[5] These categories are further divided into various subcategories.

Categories

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has established ten disability categories, including physical, visual, and intellectual impairment. Athletes with one of these disabilities can compete in the Paralympics, are divided within each category according to their level of impairment, in a functional classification system which differs from sport to sport (not every sport can allow for every disability category). These categories apply to both Summer and Winter Paralympics.

Physical Impairment – There are eight different types of physical impairment:

Impaired muscle power – With impairments in this category, the force generated by muscles, such as the muscles of one limb, one side of the body or the lower half of the body is reduced, (e.g. spinal cord injury, spina bifida, post-polio syndrome).

Impaired passive range of movement – The range of movement in one or more joints is reduced in a systematic way. Acute conditions such as arthritis are not included.

Loss of limb or limb deficiency – A total or partial absence of bones or joints from partial or total loss due to illness, trauma, or congenital limb deficiency (e.g., dysmelia).

Leg-length difference – Significant bone shortening occurs in one leg due to congenital deficiency or trauma.

Short stature – Standing height is reduced due to shortened legs, arms and trunk, which are due to a musculoskeletal deficit of bone or cartilage structures. (e.g., achondroplasia, growth hormone deficiency, osteogenesis imperfecta)

Hypertonia – Hypertonia is marked by an abnormal increase in muscle tension and reduced ability of a muscle to stretch. Hypertonia may result from injury, disease, or conditions which involve damage to the central nervous system (e.g., cerebral palsy).

Ataxia – Ataxia is an impairment that consists of a lack of coordination of muscle movements (e.g., cerebral palsy, Friedreich's ataxia, multiple sclerosis).

Athetosis – Athetosis is generally characterized by unbalanced, involuntary movements and a difficulty maintaining a symmetrical posture (e.g., cerebral palsy, choreoathetosis).

Visual impairment – Athletes with visual impairment ranging from partial vision, sufficient to be judged legally blind, to total blindness. This includes impairment of one or more component of the visual system (eye structure, receptors, optic nerve pathway, and visual cortex).[78] The sighted guides for athletes with a visual impairment are such a close and essential part of the competition that the athlete with visual impairment and the guide are considered a team. Beginning in 2012, these guides along with sighted goalkeepers in 5-a-side football became eligible to receive medals of their own.

Intellectual disability – Athletes with a significant intellectual impairment and associated limitations in adaptive behaviour. The IPC primarily serves athletes with physical disabilities, but the disability group Intellectual Disability has been added to some Paralympic Games. This includes only elite athletes with intellectual disabilities diagnosed before the age of 18. However, the IOC-recognized Special Olympics World Games are open to all people with intellectual disabilities.

Team levelling

There are also team competitions such as wheelchair rugby or relay swimming where teams are classified as a group. Each athlete is given a sport-specific point value based on their activity limitation. A lower score indicates a more severe activity limitation than a higher score. A team cannot have more than a certain maximum total of points on the field of play at the same time to ensure equal competition. For example, in wheelchair rugby, the four players' combined disability number must total no more than eight points. However in swimming relays there are four categories, with different points totals allowed. Each team must have a combined points value of less than the category total.

There are twenty-two sports on the Summer Paralympic program and six sports on the Winter Paralympics program. Within some of the sports are several events. For example, alpine skiing has downhill, super combined, super-G, slalom, giant slalom.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paralympic_Games

Questions

1. Why is the organization of the Paralympics so complicated?
2. What potential do you see for unfairness in the competition?
3. Do you see the Paralympics as being a good idea? Why or why not?
4. Which sports could be dangerous for people with disabilities?
5. How are the visually impaired athletes assisted?

Point of view

Write your comments on the following point of view. Do you agree or disagree and why.

Topic 1

"I can't believe that the government is spending so much effort on sport. They should be focusing their attention on really important issues in our society, like schools, hospitals, defence and the police."

Topic 2

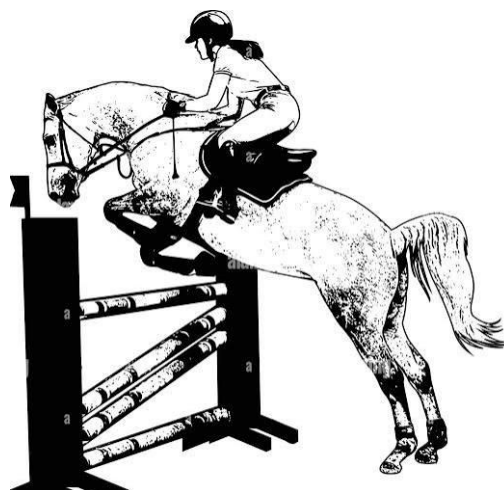
"There should be a ban on horse jumping as a sport. These events pose grave danger to horses and jockeys; they are a blot on civilised society. Animals should not be entered into dangerous competition for entertainment. Graphic images of horrific falls and of horses being put down behind screens after suffering terrible injuries have shocked us all."

Topic 3

"The internet is a monster."

Topic 4

"It's harder to be a young person today that when our parents were growing up."



The Invictus Games

The Invictus Games is an international multi-sport event first held in 2014, for wounded, injured and sick military service personnel, both serving and veterans. The word *invictus* is Latin for 'unconquered', chosen as an embodiment of the fighting spirit of the wounded, injured and sick service personnel and what they can achieve, post-injury.

The Invictus Games were founded by Prince Harry, when he was joint patron of The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, along with Sir Keith Mills, and in partnership with the Ministry of Defence. Inspiration for the Invictus Games came from Prince Harry's 2013 visit to the Warrior Games in the United States, where he witnessed the ability of sport to help both psychologically and physically.

Launch

The Games were launched on 6 March 2014 by Prince Harry at London's Copper Box arena, used as a venue during the 2012 Olympics. Having seen a British team competing at the US Warrior Games held in Colorado in 2013, Harry wished to bring the concept of a similar international sporting event to the United Kingdom. With the backing of Mayor of London Boris Johnson, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Ministry of Defence, the event was put together over ten months. £500,000 of funding for the project came from the Endeavour Fund, an arm of the Royal Foundation Prince Harry had created specifically for veterans' recovery, with an equal amount being pledged by Chancellor George Osborne from Treasury funds generated by fines.

The Games were also sponsored by Jaguar Land Rover. Speaking at the launch, Prince Harry said that the Games would "demonstrate the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and demonstrate life beyond disability". He also said that their long-term objective was to ensure that injured troops are not forgotten as Britain's involvement with the War in Afghanistan comes to an end. Boeing was announced as a sponsor in 2018 and became a presenting partner in 2023 before ending the partnership in 2026.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invictus_Games

1. Why was the name 'invictus' chosen?
2. What inspired Prince Harry to start the Invictus Games?
3. How was the first Invictus Games funded?
4. Which war was the main reason of the Games?
5. Do you think the Invictus Games are a good idea? Give reason.
6. Apart from physical injuries causing disabilities, what psychological effects do you think there might be on people who have participated in war?

Israel Folau – Christian Rugby Player

Article 1

Christian rugby player committed 'high level breach' of player conduct, panel finds

Australian rugby player Israel Folau is waiting to hear what punishment awaits him after a three-person panel concluded he committed a "high level" breach of player conduct over a controversial post about gay people.

Folau was stood down by Rugby Australia last month after he posted an image to Instagram with text saying that "hell awaits" homosexuals among others unless they repent.

1 Corinthians 6: 9-10 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

The hearing was held after Folau, a Christian, challenged the action taken against him by Rugby Australia. The hearing ran into a third day on Tuesday after reaching a stalemate.

The 30-year-old, originally from Tonga, who plays for the Wallabies, has divided opinion in the rugby world but also among Christians.

Writing about the row over Folau's post, Brian Houston, senior pastor of the Australian-based Hillsong Church, suggested in the Sydney Morning Herald that the star player's comments had been "harsh".

"In 40 years of telling people about the good news of Jesus, I have seen that the 'turn or burn', approach to proclaiming the message of Christianity alienates people. Scaring people doesn't draw them into the love of Jesus," he said.

He added, "The world doesn't need more judgmental Christians."

Laurence Wilkinson, legal counsel at ADF International, said that the actions against Folau sent a "chilling message" to other players who share his views.

"Israel Folau could certainly have expressed his views in a more sensitive manner, but to be fired for expressing them at all would, in my view, be an absolutely travesty for freedom of expression in sport," he wrote in the Spectator.

"To suggest that the removal of Folau is in the pursuit of 'tolerance and respect' makes a mockery of the terms, and as some of Folau's teammates have already noted, it sends out a chilling message to all those who share his views.

"If Rugby Australia's management genuinely wants the sport to be 'inclusive for all', it needs to start by including players that it disagrees with."

Folau's own family has leapt to his defence in light of the furore.

His father, Eni Folau, a church pastor, told the 7News network on Monday: "Israel does not do any wrong at all, all the words he posted doesn't come from him, it comes from the Bible."

His cousin, Josiah Folau, said: "The important thing for us is not so much the outcome, but how the glory of God is revealed throughout this situation and that his truth is preached to the whole world."

<https://www.christiantoday.com.au/news/christian-rugby-player-committed-high-level-breach-of-player-conduct-panel-finds.html> July 5 2026

Article 2

Israel Folau sacked for social media post

Israel Folau has been sacked. Rugby Australia have terminated the Wallaby full back's contract because of a controversial social media post. The matter now looks set for the courts.

A three-person independent panel recommended termination 10 days after deciding Folau had committed a "high-level" code of conduct breach.

Rugby Australia have accepted the sanction, but stress it is "a painful situation for the game".

Folau said "hell awaits" "drunks, homosexuals, adulterers, liars, fornicators, thieves, atheists, idolators", on his Instagram account in April.

He was previously warned for making homophobic comments on social media in 2018, but did not face disciplinary action.

The full back has 72 hours to appeal. He is expected to bring a free speech case to the Australian courts.

Rugby Australia chief executive Raelene Castle told a press conference: "We are here to announce that Wallabies and Waratahs player Israel Folau has today been issued a sanction directing termination of his playing contract for his high-level breach of the professional players' code of conduct.

"Rugby Australia did not choose to be in the situation, but Rugby Australia's position remains that Israel, through his actions, left us with no choice but to pursue the course of action resulting in today's outcome.

"This has been an extremely challenging period for rugby. This issue has created an unwanted distraction in an important year for the sport and for the Wallabies team.

"But our clear message for all rugby fans today is that we need to stand by our values and the qualities of inclusion, passion, integrity, discipline, respect and teamwork."

<https://www.offtheball.com/rugby/israel-folau-sacked-social-media-post-860304>

Article 3

Support for Israel Falau from current and former sporting stars

Israel Folau's failed bid to return to the NRL has triggered a wave of support from current and former sporting stars, with several high-profile figures accusing the game of hypocrisy and double standards.

Folau was sacked by Rugby Australia after a series of social media posts in which he said gay people, among others, would go to hell unless they repented.

The comments sparked widespread condemnation and ultimately led to a lengthy legal battle before a confidential settlement was reached.

Now, seven years later, a growing list of current and former players has publicly questioned why Folau remains effectively locked out of the game.

Former Wallabies star Quade Cooper was among the most vocal supporters.

'The irony of inclusivity... excluding someone in the name of inclusion. You can't claim to champion diversity while deciding who gets to participate. Make it make sense,' Cooper said. 'Funny how some people are happy to preach inclusivity until it's someone they disagree with. Meanwhile, players involved in drugs or domestic violence toward women seem to get a pass. Make it make sense.'

Current Canterbury Bulldogs prop Max King also questioned why Folau should be excluded because of his religious beliefs.

'I think every fan and spectator wants to see Israel back in the league,' King said.

Bulldogs prop Max King said Folau's beliefs should be respected like anyone else's.

'I guess we want everyone's voice to be heard, and everyone's opinion matters. I think equally in the same fact that Israel has his beliefs and I think they should be valued as well.'

King, who has been open about his Christian faith, said religion has long been part of rugby league culture.

'Part of what makes our game so great is, as a Christian myself, the way that faith is broadcast,' King said.

'I think having Christian athletes, anyone with an opinion, it's their opinion and it's their right to speak.'

Former NRL player Sandor Earl also defended Folau's right to express his beliefs despite not agreeing with everything he has posted.

'Both sides have a right to defend their beliefs,' Earl said.

'I don't fully agree with Izzy's posts, but I don't have to. That's the whole point.

'Live your life. Love who you want. Believe whatever you want. The battle isn't against each other; it's with the agenda.

'All people can live in harmony, including players. With acceptance that choices should be free of judgement and should not persecute the opposing side.'

Earl said the debate had become increasingly one-sided.

Folau's troubles began in 2017 when he publicly opposed same-sex marriage during Australia's postal survey campaign

The controversy intensified in 2018 when Folau said gay people would go to hell unless they repented in a social media post that also included drunks, adulterers, liars, fornicators, thieves, atheists and idolaters.

'And I think that the media played a huge part in taking it and spinning it the way they wanted to.

'I've got a lot of family members that are gay, you know. And I still love them the same.

'But in terms of hate, or anything towards the LGBTQ community, I actually don't.

'Like, my intention from my heart is to spread that in love, based on what I believe in from what the bible says.'

'There's no question his words and his social media post back then caused offence and hurt. But how long does the punishment last? Forever?

'He lost a massive rugby contract, he went through years of public criticism and humiliation, and now, at 37, when a rugby league coach wants to give him a short-term shot, the game still says no.

'Why? Because apparently, it's a bad look.'

Radio host Ben Fordham compared Folau's situation to players who have returned from criminal and behavioural scandals.

'The NRL has given second chances to players after court cases, drug issues, violent behaviour and drunken scandals.

'And when that happens, we hear the same words - redemption, growth, rehabilitation.

'But if you post something offensive on social media, it can haunt you for life.'

Former NRL player Dayne Weston said that Falou had simply expressed a religious belief.

'Izzy didn't write a hit piece. He didn't call for hatred. He didn't attack individuals. He shared Scripture.

'People are free to disagree with Christianity. They're free to disagree with the Bible. They're free to disagree with Izzy.

'But disagreement isn't hate.'

Support has also flowed from within rugby league circles.

Former NRL player Eddy Pettybourne commented: 'Crazy how people can commit actual crimes and still find their way back into the NRL, yet someone quotes Scripture and gets banned for life.'

Folau has also continued to publicly express his Christian faith throughout the controversy.

'The gospel is for everyone, but not everyone will choose the narrow path. The question is: are you all in for Jesus?' he wrote.

Despite the growing support for Folau, neither the NRL nor ARL Commission has publicly responded to the latest allegations made by Folau and his supporters.

<https://www.dailymail.com/sport/nrl/article-15921167/Israel-Folau-return-NRL-religion-homophobia-support-footy-stars.html> 23 June 2026

Questions

1. What was Israel Falau's crime?
2. What is Israel Falau's national and family background?
3. "To suggest that the removal of Folau is in the pursuit of 'tolerance and respect' makes a mockery of the terms..." (Article 1). Explain what this means in the context of Falau's situation.
4. What do you think of Brian Houston's comments in Article 1? Do you agree or disagree and why?

5. What do you think of Rugby Australia's decision in Article 2? Was it just or unjust and why?
6. In your own words, restate the opinion of former Wallabies star Quade Cooper in Article 3.
7. What is the opinion of Max King?
8. What does Sandor Earl think?
9. Why do you think the NRL has not responded to the messages of Falau's supporters?
10. What are Falau's words at the end of Article 3?

Transgender athletes

Article 1

With many teenagers and young adults becoming confused about gender these days, what implications does this have for competitive sport?

If a male decides that they no longer want to be a male, and takes drugs to alter his hormones and therefore, bodily characteristics, is that person's participation in competitive sport fair?

God created humanity as two distinct sexes: "male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). This biological distinction, established at conception, is purposeful and foundational to the human experience, regardless of a person's internal feelings or gender identity.

For athletic competition, this biological design matters immensely. Studies confirm that advantages conferred by male puberty—including greater bone density, lung volume, heart size, and skeletal structure—are substantial and irreversible. Even with hormone therapy, these male biological advantages persist and significantly impact the fairness and competitive integrity of female sports.

Should a male who decides he wants to be a female, be allowed to participate in women's competitive sports?

The command to love your neighbour includes a duty to pursue justice, which in this context means protecting the equal opportunity of all female athletes.

Sports are separated by sex precisely because of the inherent, biological advantage men have over women. Female sports were created to ensure fair competition and equal opportunities for biological women.

When biological males compete in female categories, it fundamentally undermines the very category of female sports. The Christian conversation should advocate for policies that

protect the fairness and competitive integrity of the female category so that girls and women can achieve success against peers with similar biological structure.

Safety Considerations

In contact sports, there is also a critical need to consider the safety implications for biological female athletes when competing against biological males, whose physical strength often exceeds that of females.

Leading with Compassionate Dignity (The Christ-Like Way)

Every individual, including those who identify as transgender, is made in the Image of God and deserves unconditional love, respect, and dignity. The parent, coach, or Christian speaker must treat the individual with the same grace and patience Christ shows us (1 Peter 3:15).

Christians can acknowledge the real, often painful, internal struggle of gender dysphoria without affirming the proposed solution (transitioning). We should seek to understand their pain and offer pastoral care and support.

Conclusion

The Christian perspective does not shy away from the biological and spiritual truth that God made us male and female. However, we must never use that truth as a weapon.

In talking about transgender athletes, Christian parents and leaders should speak the truth about biology, fairness, and safety for female sports, while simultaneously demonstrating the unconditional love and respect due to every person made in the image of God. Our goal is to seek justice for all and point every person to the ultimate hope and identity found in Jesus Christ.

<https://www.stepswithjesus.com/jesus-for-today-blog/christian-view-transgender-athletes-sports>

Article 2

A world without God at the centre...will lead to the mess we are observing in sport.

There is a clear distinction between men and women's sporting ability.

For Christians our worldview begins with a God who created us, so there are certain universal truths that he establishes. These absolutes include the creation of all humanity with dignity and equality. While God makes human beings in his image, male and female, he distinguishes between the two and recognises and affirms their differences. Our biological sex is given to us by God; it is not something changeable.

If, however, our worldview does not begin with God, then our identity may be formed by our feelings. This relativism is a weak foundation on which to construct any worldview. In a society without moral absolutes, the loudest and most aggressive cultural value of the day

will win. A world without God at the centre, a culture without the binding authority of a God who lovingly creates and rules, will lead to the mess we are observing in sport today.

The fractured conversation in sport is about the place of *inclusion* versus *the fairness of competition*. It would be almost impossible for biological women to qualify for elite events in most sports if the balance tips in favour of inclusion. As Sebastian Coe indicates: if a person regardless of their birth sex could compete in any sport they chose, it would result in the death of women's sport.

Doriane Coleman is a Professor of Law at Duke University in North Carolina and was a national 800m runner in the United States. She explains that the performance gap between men and women is around 10-12 per cent: "Without an eligibility rule based on sex-linked traits, we wouldn't see female bodies on any podium."

Compassion versus fairness

The biblical worldview regarding the fixed nature of biological sex means there should be no compromise regarding male access to women's sport, but as Christians we are also called to love our trans neighbours. So how do we reconcile these two seemingly contradictory things?

While discussing policies and fairness, it is essential not to lose sight of the individuals involved and the agonies they face – both those struggling with gender dysphoria and those competing against them. All people, the Bible teaches, have been made in God's image, so all of us have inherent dignity, irrespective of our public and private struggles.

As sportspeople on each side of this debate challenge one another to think more deeply and find solutions that work for everyone, Christians can be clear on the need to protect women's sport and spaces while engaging compassionately and sensitively with the pain of those wrestling with their gender identity.

<https://www.premierchristianity.com/opinion/theres-no-place-for-transgender-athletes-in-womens-sport-but-christians-must-show-compassion/12808.article>

Questions

1. What would be the problems arising from males and females competing together in sports?
2. What is meant by 'inclusion' in the second article?
3. Do you think the idea of 'inclusion' can go too far? Give reason.
4. List two points that both articles emphasise.
5. What is the debate mentioned in the last paragraph of Article 2?
6. What stance would the Christian take in this debate?

Novak Djokovic – World Famous Tennis Player

Article 1

World famous men's tennis player Novak Djokovic arrived in Melbourne, Australia in January 2022 to compete in the Australian Open but was stopped at the airport and held in hotel detention after he failed to produce evidence he had been vaccinated or had been issued a valid medical exemption, a requirement for anyone entering Australia at the time.

In 2022, everyone had to be vaccinated with the Covid-19 vaccination to be able to travel or work.

The Serbian player launched a legal fight to be allowed to stay, but his visa was eventually cancelled on "health and good order grounds," leading to his deportation.

During a Facebook live, he explained that he "wouldn't want to be forced by someone to take a vaccine" to travel or compete in tournaments.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-59897918>

Article 2

Novak Djokovic was "ready to abandon his career" when he made the decision not to get vaccinated, according to his former coach Goran Ivanisevic.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenging period for everyone around the world. It was a period when the world was presented with a new challenge, and seemingly no one knew how to deal with it.

At one point, the vaccine seemed like the solution, but even though many were willing to get vaccinated, there were some who didn't want to. Everyone had their reasons.

One of those who didn't want to get vaccinated was Novak Djokovic. That decision cost the Serbian legend when it comes to the titles won and weeks spent as the World No. 1, but in the eyes of many, it further strengthened his legacy.

Many criticized Djokovic for the decision, but many also praised him for choosing what he perceived was right for him. Looking back on that period a few years later, it's clear that the 24-time major winner could have had more Grand Slam titles to his name if he had been allowed to compete in all countries during the pandemic.

At the same time, that period showed that he wanted to go his own path and he wasn't influenced by anything that was said about him.

"Novak refused the vaccine, ready to abandon his career, a decision no other elite athlete would do. The world condemned him, criticized him relentlessly, even belittled him for standing firm. Yet he never wavered, standing firm in his conviction with a determination that still resonates," said his coach.

During the interview, the coach emphasized one thing. While Djokovic didn't want to get vaccinated, he never told anyone else not to get vaccinated. He said publicly several times that it was a decision he was making for his body, that he knew his body best, and that he didn't want to do that."

<https://tennis-infinity.com/news/novak-djokovic-was-ready-to-abandon-his-career-with-vaccine-decision-says-ex-coach>

Article 3

"My stance is exactly the same today as it was a few years ago," Djokovic said. "I'm not pro-vaccine. I'm not anti-vax. I am pro-freedom to choose what is right for you and your body. So when somebody takes away my right to choose what I should be taking for my body, I don't think that's correct."

Djokovic ended up returning to the Australian Open and claiming his 10th title in the tournament the following year.

<https://www.mensjournal.com/news/novak-djokovic-reason-deported-australia>

Reflection

The advent of the Covid-19 virus, (a kind of flu), in early 2020 set the world in panic mode. Big pharmaceutical companies fast-tracked a vaccine, which was available a year later. Health Experts assured the world that the vaccine was 'safe and effective' although it soon became evident that the vaccine did not stop people from getting Covid, and people who were not vaccinated were not carriers of the disease. While the first strain of the virus was severe, as the virus mutated it became less severe and no worse than an average bout of the flu. But still people were being discriminated against for not being vaccinated. Many people refused to get vaccinated and therefore lost their jobs. Doctors who refused to promote the vaccine lost their registration. There were certain scientists who were gagged for presenting their findings, showing that in some cases the vaccine could have serious side effects. (Their findings were quite different to those of the Health Experts.)

1. What was Djokovic's main reason for not getting vaccinated? (See Articles 2 & 3.)
2. What form of discrimination was happening in 2022? Who was affected?
3. How does the next article, "Forest of the Fallen" show that Djokovic made a reasonable and fair decision?

Forest of the Fallen

Forest of the Fallen is an organization set up in Australia by volunteers, in support of people injured by the Covid-19 vaccination, and in support of families whose loved-ones died as a

result. The display of placards, giving information and sometimes photos of the injured or deceased, moves around from park to park in different places in Australia, for public viewing.

<https://theforestofthefallen.com/> updated 18.12.2023

From the Forest of the Fallen website ...

Forest of the Fallen is a silent display, set up and then left to work its intention on all who are open to witness and interact with it; It is not a protest; it is not a database. It is solely a platform where we share only cv19 injection deaths and injuries that I have personally found, only where stories have been publicly shared and published on multiple sources. Some have been personally shared to me, but the majority are not.

The Forest has no need for any marketing, advertising or spruiking! It propagates alone and speaks for itself entirely.

The Forest is a stand-alone display and Is NOT AT ALL affiliated with any other movement, group, religion or political party and must NOT be used to promote any other business or entity that are not in alignment with its original purpose.

As an initiative, I intend for us to work in unity, together to help spread the most important message to all. We must gently alert all we can, that this information is being censored. We are not offering medical advice.

The Forest comes purely from a place of compassion for all. All forms of conflict must be avoided at all times.

The Forest displays the public domain stories of cv19 “vaccinated” people. As they are all vaccinated, it is literally, actually a completely vaccinated display, and should NEVER be referred to as an ‘anti-vax’ display.

