Chapter 6

An ethical leadership perspective on good governance in sport

From star players to team sport

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Introduction

At the professional and non-professional level alike, ethical scandals have rocked the world of sport. Along with an increasing need for more effective sport management, these scandals have given rise to persistent calls for good governance (e.g. Constandt, De Waegeneer & Willem 2018; Geeraert, Alm & Groll 2014; Loyens et al. 2021); and not without reason. For sport to fulfil both its societal and commercial functions, it is critical that the integrity of athletes, coaches, referees, and sport organisations be beyond question and that the game itself can be trusted at face value (Forrest, McHale & McAuley 2008; Gardiner et al. 2017; Numerato 2016). In recent years, sport governing bodies and sport organisations such as FIFA or the Dutch NOC*NSF have thus invested in creating extensive ethics infrastructures, implementing numerous procedures, ethics codes, rules and regulations, as well as structures to monitor, report and sanction. Nevertheless, moral transgressions in sport remain at the front pages of our newspapers.

One explanation for why unethical behaviour in sport keeps coming to light, is that the notion of good governance has yet to be fully incorporated into the day-to-day practices of sport leaders. To date, both research and practice in sport emphasise formal-legal structures, policies, and bureaucratic instruments to counter unethical behaviour (Geeraert & Drieskens 2015). Studies beyond the realm of sports, however, consistently show that, while formal-legal measures, ethics programs, codes, training and the like have an important role to play in curbing unethical behaviour (Treviño & Nelson 2016), they are unlikely to have much effect on ethical decisions and behaviour if they are not embodied by the words and deeds of those in positions of power (e.g. Constandt, De Waegeneer & Willem 2019; Treviño et al. 1999). Followers look to leaders to understand what 'the organisation' *truly* values, recognises and rewards (Heres 2014). Hence, where leadership fails to show visible support for such formal ethics and compliance measures, and implicitly prioritises organisational goals and performance indicators over moral values, the credibility and validity of such instruments of ethics is undermined. Ultimately, this can render compliance and ethics measures ineffective, while leaders lose moral authority and followers become increasingly

cynical (Bird & Waters 1989; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman 2003). In fact, unethical behaviour may actually *increase* under such circumstances: in organisations with extensive formal ethics management and governance structures, a leader's lack of ethical responsiveness and guidance may stand out even more because it deviates from the explicitly communicated expectations and norms for behaviour. This creates especially ambiguous situations for followers wherein the leader may be seen to actively reject an ethical stance (Quade et al. 2020). In turn, followers are likely to become less persistent in their support for ethics and unethical behaviour ultimately increases (Greenbaum et al. 2015; Quade et al. 2020). In short, only when ethics programs are translated into actual practices at different levels of leadership within sport organisations can such programs truly prevail (Constandt 2019; De Waegeneer & Willem 2016; Treviño et al. 1999).

Because of the effects of leadership on followers' sense-making and their perception of the meaning and value of formal compliance and ethics measures, it is critically important to ensure ethical leadership as a precondition to good governance. Ethical leadership enhances the moral awareness and decision-making of followers (e.g. Brown, Treviño & Harrison 2005; Steinbauer et al. 2014). And by improving the ethical climate and psychological safety, it fosters followers' voice and speak-up behaviour (Hu et al. 2018; Kim & Vandenberghe 2020). As a consequence, ethical leadership reduces counterproductive, deviant and outright unethical behaviour and heightens not just commitment and prosocial behaviour in organisations but also task performance (Bedi, Alpaslan & Green 2016; Peng & Kim 2020). But while scholars produced an impressive amount of research on ethical leadership, its effects, and its antecedents in the last 15 years (Bedi et al. 2016), research on ethical leadership in sport remains decidedly less capacious (Constandt et al. 2020).

This chapter aims to highlight how research on ethical leadership can further our understanding of and practices towards good governance in sport. To this end, it first draws on more general administrative and business ethics research to set out the key components that prevailing perspectives on ethical leadership distinguish. It then provides a brief discussion of research on ethical leadership in sport. The following section offers a critical commentary on the limits of taking an ethical leadership perspective on good governance in sport. These insights are subsequently used to delineate key indicators of good governance from an ethical leadership perspective. The concluding section summarises the discussion and lists some important implications for both research and practice.

Ethical leadership explained

Current ethical leadership research has its roots in social and organisational psychology and draws heavily on social learning theory (Bandura 1977, 1986), social exchange theory (Blau 1964; Gouldner 1960) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1986; Turner 1975). In their seminal work on the topic, Brown et al. define ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct

through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (2005, p. 120). Underlying this definition is the distinction between the moral person and moral manager component (Treviño, Hartman & Brown 2000). The 'moral person' component is typically understood in terms of the personal character and motivation of the leader herself. It highlights the importance of leaders' own moral values, their concern for 'doing the right thing', moral traits such as authenticity, reliability, and trustworthiness, high levels of moral awareness, and ethical decision-making (Kalshoven, Den Hartog & De Hoogh 2011; Kaptein 2003; Treviño et al. 2000). 'Moral management', in contrast, focuses on the leadership process and involves the proactive, socially salient efforts to safeguard and promote ethics among others. Recently, Kaptein (2019) added a third component to ethical leadership, arguing that ethical leaders must also be 'moral entrepreneurs' who proactively contribute to the development of new moral norms. While the moral person component remains a vital and necessary part of ethical leadership (Treviño et al. 2003), it is not a sufficient condition for ethical leadership. Rather, it is the moral management and moral entrepreneurship that differentiate ethical leaders from amoral (i.e. 'ethically neutral' rather unethical) management that focuses on efficiency, effectiveness, and bottom-line results and fails to provide followers with ethical guidance (Greenbaum et al. 2015; Quade et al. 2020).

Moral management consists of three key aspects: (1) role modelling ethical behaviour in a visible manner, (2) reinforcement of moral values and norms, and (3) two-way communication about ethics (Brown et al. 2005; Kalshoven, Den Hartog & De Hoogh 2011; Yukl et al. 2013). Role modelling is the first and perhaps most critical aspect: without it, all other efforts to promote ethics quickly lose credibility. Followers look to the behaviours that leaders exhibit in order to understand what behaviours are or are not acceptable, appropriate and valued in the organisation. It follows that a leader's decisions and behaviours must be sufficiently visible and salient to be observed by followers "against an organisational backdrop that is often ethically neutral at best" (Brown & Treviño 2006, p. 597). Yet, followers' perceptions of leadership are interpretations of what they see and as such, they are far from neutral: perceptions are shaped by both the context in which the behaviour occurs and by the more general experiences, expectations, ideals, and assumptions of followers themselves (Heres 2014; Quade et al. 2020). Ethical leaders therefore must not only avoid behaviours that could be perceived as inconsistent with moral values and norms, but also undertake efforts to learn how their decisions and behaviours are interpreted by followers, and they must proactively provide followers with insights into the reasoning behind their decisions and behaviours (Weaver, Treviño & Agle 2005). At the same time, ethical leaders are not without flaws. It is precisely in how they show vulnerability and account for their own mistakes, acknowledging those mistakes and using them as valuable learning experiences for themselves *and* others, that ethical leaders lower the threshold for followers to be open about their dilemmas and mistakes as well (Heres 2014).

A second aspect of moral management consists of clear and consistent reinforcement of the normative standards of the group. In other words, ethical leaders make sure to support, acknowledge and reward those who adhere to normative standards and compliment those who do 'the right thing', while holding those accountable who commit moral transgressions. Here, informal rewards such as recognition, trust and status, and informal sanctions like ostracism by peers and leaders, can be quite powerful instruments (Grojean et al. 2004; Treviño 1992). Conversely, while formal reinforcement such as demotion or suspension may prove necessary for recurring or severe cases, too strong a focus on formal consequences may actually lower followers' independent moral reasoning and foster goal displacement (Bartol & Locke 2000; Baucus & Beck-Dudley 2005). Either way, consistent reinforcement is key because it allows the wider group to use the experiences of their peers to vicariously and anticipatorily learn what is and what is not considered 'normatively appropriate behaviour' (Brown et al. 2005; Mayer et al. 2009; Treviño 1992). As with role modelling, however, such learning can only occur when leaders make rewards and punishments sufficiently visible to other followers as well (Treviño et al. 2000). The importance of vicarious learning furthermore underscores the importance of using a fair and proportionate amount of authority; not punishing too harshly or too lightly. Otherwise, what is meant as a message that transgressions of moral norms are not tolerated may actually result in resentment and cynicism (Johnson 2005).

Communication about ethics is the third and final aspect of moral management (Brown et al. 2005). It includes an explication of the leader's own moral decision-making processes, clarification of norms and role expectations, and guidance on appropriate action (De Hoogh & Den Hartog 2008; Treviño et al. 2003). At the same time, it is about being approachable, listening to followers, having open discussions about the group's values, and facilitating joint reflections on the moral dilemmas and implications of the decisions and tasks at hand (Grojean et al. 2004; Huberts, Kaptein & Lasthuizen 2007; Van den Akker et al. 2009). By engaging followers in the moral decision-making processes and allowing them to voice their own perspectives and concerns, ethical leaders stimulate them to view things from different perspectives, to question their assumptions, and to think independently and creatively about moral issues (Heres & Lasthuizen 2012; Resick et al. 2006). Such empowerment of followers helps them to further develop their own, independent moral reasoning and judgement (Den Hartog & De Hoogh 2009; Resick et al. 2006).

Recently, Kaptein (2019) argued that ethical leadership involves not just a moral person and moral management component, but also moral entrepreneurship. As Kaptein explains: "whereas the moral person is oriented toward *who* the leader is and the moral manager toward *how* the leader influences others, the moral entrepreneur is focused on *what* norms to establish" (2019, p. 1140). Applying a social development perspective to ethical leadership, he emphasises that ethical leaders should not just comply with and reinforce existing ethical

standards, but instead are "frontrunners in ethics" (2019, p. 1143) by proactively leading the development of new moral norms and insights. Particularly in situations where existing moral norms are incomplete or inadequate, there is an opportunity for leaders to not just lead *with* ethics, but to actually lead *in* ethics as well. Under such circumstances, Kaptein (2019) suggests, ethical leaders must draw on their high levels of moral awareness, moral reasoning skills and moral identity to develop new moral perspectives and sound moral arguments to substantiate their own proposed norms. While further empirical research on moral entrepreneurship is necessary, ethical leaders' proactive, indeed *leading* role in the development of moral norms seems an important aspect to consider.

In addition to the components of moral person, moral manager and moral entrepreneurship, it is important to consider the foundation upon which ethical leadership is built, namely the quality of the leader-follower relationship. Although not generally considered a component of ethical leadership *per se*, leaders' decisions and behaviours inevitably affect their relationship with followers and thereby their ability to influence their followers' (ethical) decision-making and behaviour (Heres & Lasthuizen 2012). As such, the quality of the socio-emotional exchange between leaders and followers provides an important moderating mechanism through which leaders can foster ethics (Peng & Kim 2020). By being open, respectful, trusting, fair and loyal towards followers, ethical leaders build high-quality relations with their followers (Brown et al. 2005; Mayer et al. 2009). Followers are likely to then reciprocate with positive, pro-social behaviour and refrainment from unethical behaviour that may hurt the leader or the group (e.g. Neubert et al. 2009; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck 2009). Moreover, treating followers in a fair and just manner reinforces the credibility and moral authority of leaders and enhances followers' motivation to emulate the leader's ethical behaviour (De Schrijver et al. 2010; Neubert et al. 2009). The effectiveness of ethical leadership is thus in part based on the ability of leaders to maintain high quality relations and interactions with their followers.

Ethical leadership in sport

As in other sectors, high-profile scandals over the past two decades have pushed calls for more ethical leadership in sport. Sport forms a preeminent context in which moral issues are likely to arise and where the behaviours of coaches, managers, and board members can have profound effects on others (Constandt et al. 2020). Practitioners and scholars look to leaders as a link between good governance policies and good governance practices because of their critical role in creating and safeguarding an ethical climate in sport clubs and federations (e.g. Burton et al. 2017; Thompson & Dieffenbach 2016). Where leadership is amoral or even outright unethical, moral transgressions in sport governance are likely to persist (cf. Tomlinson 2014; Welty Peachey et al. 2015). Unethical and amoral leadership can create moral ambiguity and reduce followers' persistence in speaking up and raising moral issues, thereby undermining the workings of

internal control systems aimed at enhancing integrity, transparency and democracy (cf. Greenbaum et al. 2015; Quade et al. 2020). Many thus consider ethical leadership essential to ensure that the moral risks inherent to sport are mitigated and that the positive societal impact of sport prevails (e.g. Constandt 2019).

Against this background, the dearth of research on ethical leadership in sport seems all the more surprising (Constandt et al. 2018; Welty Peachey et al. 2015). To date, only a handful of conceptual and especially normative contributions exist. These mostly underscore the need for ethical leadership (e.g. Lumpkin & Doty 2014; Roby 2014), discuss what is 'normatively appropriate' for ethical leaders in sport (e.g. Constandt et al. 2020; Sagas & Wigley 2014), or draw on sport experiences to illuminate virtues that may be important to ethical leadership (Bischak & Woiceshyn 2016). Some emphasise that sport is a specific context with its own unique characteristics, such as its governance structures, that may pose unique challenges to ethical leadership (Staurowsky 2014; Welty Peachey et al. 2015). Nevertheless, insights from both business and administrative ethics are recognised as promising starting points to further our understanding of what ethical leadership in sport entails (Constandt et al. 2020; Lumpkin & Doty 2014).

While few in number, the available empirical studies on ethical leadership in sport support the value of incorporating administrative and business ethics insights into sport and sport governance research. Hamilton and LaVoi (2017, 2020), for instance, show how coaches' ethical role-modelling can impact the moral development, voice behaviour and performance of athletes. And Wells and Walker (2016) found the aspect of transparent communication of ethical leadership to be especially important in organisational change processes in athletic departments. Providing more direct support for the relevance and generalisability of ethical leadership research to sport settings, Yukhymenko-Lescroart, Brown and Paskus (2015) report that ethical leadership can positively stimulate athletes' perceptions of an inclusive team climate as well as their satisfaction.[1] Subsequent studies show that ethical leadership can promote positive organisational behaviour from staff members within athletic college departments (Cotrufo 2014), improve ethical climates and affective commitment to sports clubs (Constandt et al. 2018), reinforce and strengthen the effects of ethics codes (Constandt et al. 2019), and stimulate a sense of accountability among athletes. All of these increase voice behaviours as well as individual and team performance (White & Rezania 2019). Meanwhile, empirical studies that identify unique practices, antecedents, consequences and boundary conditions of ethical leadership in sport are non-existent. In fact, contrary to the notion that (ethical) sport leadership may differ because of the influence of fans and alumni (Welty Peachey et al. 2015), research by Constandt and colleagues seems to suggest that fans do not only have no specific concern for ethical leadership (unless it affects them); the impact of fans on internal sport leadership processes may actually be quite limited in practice (Constandt, Parent & Willem 2020).

Good governance in sport: An ethical leadership perspective

Taking an ethical leadership perspective on good governance in sport shows us that any assessment of the quality of governance in sport must necessarily include assessment of the extent to which leaders at different levels of sport organisations and sport governing bodies are perceived as moral people, moral managers, and moral entrepreneurs. Such an assessment in and of itself is far from sufficient, however. This author proposes that assessing the quality of governance from an ethical leadership perspective requires an in-depth examination of at least three indicators: (1) long-term stakeholder perceptions of ethical leadership practices, (2) psychological safety and ethical climate, and (3) the structural embeddedness of ethical leadership.

Indicator 1: Long-term stakeholder perceptions of ethical leadership practices. Consistent and visible ethical leadership of sport organisations and sport governing bodies is key. Assessments of ethical leadership must examine perceptions of leaders at different hierarchical levels from the viewpoint of a broad stakeholder group, and not just from that of prospective follower perceptions (cf. Constandt et al. 2020; Heres 2015). Within-group and between-group differences in such perceptions provide important information on specific areas of improvement of ethical leadership practices. Likewise, strong fluctuations in perceptions over time may indicate that ethical leadership is not consistently embodied in practice and requires more attention.

Indicator 2: Psychological safety and ethical climate. On the one hand, ethical leadership is important because leaders' decision-making power is generally greater than that of followers and often represents the sport organisation as a whole. On the other hand, the leaders' role in good governance is precisely to lead others in following them to do the right thing in the right way. Assessing the quality of governance from a leadership perspective, hence, also involves an assessment of the extent to which leaders actually succeed in fostering an environment in which followers behave ethically. Perceptions of the general ethical climate and discussability of moral issues (cf. Constandt et al. 2018; Kaptein 2008), followers' psychological safety and tendency to speak up, voice critiques and provide feedback (cf. Hu et al. 2018; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck 2009), and their ethical decision-making and behaviour (cf. Kuenzi, Mayer & Greenbaum 2020) are thus key aspects to consider when assessing the quality of governance.

Indicator 3: Structural embeddedness of ethical leadership. A final question in assessing the governance of sport organisations is whether ethical leadership is actually likely to emerge, sustain and succeed in the long-term. Here, it is important to consider (i) the criteria by which sport leaders are selected, trained, acknowledged and promoted, (ii) the resources (e.g. time, policies and instruments) available to practice ethical leadership, and (iii) the practices of others who act on behalf of the organisation and, as such, can both strengthen and undermine the leaders' messages to employees, such as in HR and legal departments (e.g. Greenbaum et al. 2015; Heres 2016).

A critical reflection on an ethical leadership perspective on good governance

The ethical leadership perspective on good governance in sport holds much promise. Foremost, it directs our attention away from the macro- and meso-level good governance structures and to the micro-level behaviours of actual actors involved in sport and sport organisations. It can shed light on why and under which conditions good governance measures are more or less likely to succeed, and how we can move from policies' intentions to actual everyday practices. Yet, we must recognise that there are also risks involved in looking at good governance from a leadership perspective. Three risks in particular must be taken into account when applying it to good governance in sport.

A first risk has to do with the narrow focus that a leadership perspective tends to put on individual leaders as either omnipotent heroes, incompetent failures or evil villains. Leadership is often—erroneously—equated with the person of the leader (Stech 2008). Ethical leadership is not built on star players, however: it is a team sport that requires solid systems and structures to safeguard, support and reinforce it. Too strong a focus on individual leaders can easily result in an excessive focus on the characteristics and behaviours of formal leaders, and a general neglect of the social, interactive processes through which leadership takes places or potentially can take place. Successes and failures of ethical leaders are not merely the result of knowledge, skills and motivation or a lack thereof on the leader's part. For one, coaches' ethical leadership is partly shaped by the ethical leadership of boards and managers (Constandt & Willem 2019), while the opposite is also true: top-level ethical leadership is dependent on support and emulation by lower-level leaders to effectively communicate their ethics agenda (Heres 2016). Moreover, as implied above, ethical leadership is more likely to sustain and be effective when it is supported by followers, when it is acknowledged and rewarded in the organisation, and when it is facilitated, trained and reinforced by the wider ethical climate and more generic HR and governance systems that also affect, for instance, how employees are hired and treated by the organisation (e.g. Greenbaum et al. 2015; Heres 2016). Lastly, as organisational culture and structure are closely intertwined and mutually interdependent, systemic measures such as procedures, compliance systems, risk analyses, clear and safe reporting systems, and monitoring systems remain vital features of any healthy infrastructure with integrity (Hoekstra & Heres 2016). While ethical leadership may be a critical, necessary condition for good governance, it is by no means a sufficient one. An ethical leadership perspective hence will only ever be able to provide a partial picture of the quality of governance in sport.

Another risk relates to the subjective, temporal and equivocal nature of any assessment of ethical leadership. Moral values and norms are inherently dynamic and contextual. Moreover, followers respond not to a leader's behaviour but to their own perceptions and interpretations thereof (e.g. Heres 2014 for a more extensive discussion). Given that norms, perceptions and interpretations partly depend on attributes of both the context and followers themselves, no one style of

ethical leadership will fit all (Heres 2014), and no objective assessment of ethical leadership can be made. Furthermore, an assessment of ethical leadership requires us to examine and weigh not only the perceptions of followers. As stakeholders such as fans, media, sponsors, and government play an important role in the social construction of what is 'normatively appropriate' for leadership in sport, their perceptions of ethical leadership provided by sport leaders is relevant as well (Constandt et al. 2020; Constandt, Parent & Willem 2020; e.g. Loyens et al. forthcoming). Finally, judgements on the quality of ethical leadership provided are bound to fluctuate over time as experiences change, leaders leave organisations and moral norms in society continuously develop. Taken together, it is thus important to keep in mind that understanding good governance from a leadership perspective necessitates not just an assessment of ethical leadership *per se*, but also insight into the organisational systems and structures that ensure ethical leadership is maintained in the long term and under ever-changing circumstances.

Lastly, we must bear in mind that ethical leadership is merely distinguished from things such as risk management, learning cultures, or diversity and inclusion programs in an analytical sense. In practice, good governance requires all of these and more at the same time. While explicit and deliberate attention to the moral aspects of decisions, behaviours, tasks, and structures is key to raising awareness, recognition and handling of such issues (e.g. Bird & Waters 1989) we must caution that analytical distinctions do not become too neatly separated fields of attention in practice. It would otherwise only result in discussions of 'ethics' and 'morals' too far removed from day-to-day work decisions, practices, and situations. And when ethical leadership is not viewed in direct relation to core tasks and processes, as well as other developments in the organisation and sector (e.g. diversity management), ethics and integrity easily become 'yet another' of the many aspects demanding leaders' attention, as something 'extra' that is reserved for when leaders have sufficient time and less workload (cf. Heres 2016; Heres & Lasthuizen 2012). Good governance hence requires an integral approach in which leaders' attention to ethics and integrity is not only embedded in day-to-day operations but is also practically and explicitly connected to other focal points of good governance.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed what good governance in sport involves from a leadership perspective. It argued that ethical leadership especially is a pillar of good governance that helps translate macro- and meso-level systems and policies to everyday moral practices. Good governance requires a sport leader to be a moral person that is reliable and trustworthy, a moral manager that proactively and visibly demonstrates, communicates about, and reinforces ethical behaviour (Brown et al. 2005), and a moral entrepreneur that contributes to the development of new moral norms (Kaptein 2019). Absent ethical leadership, amoral management or even unethical leadership may undermine more structural or systemic efforts to secure good governance (Tomlinson 2014; Welty Peachey et al. 2015). But ethical

leadership is not a panacea and cannot be adequately considered apart from the context in which it is set to take place (Heres 2014). The embeddedness of ethical leadership in wider governance structures is key to its emergence and sustainability, as is support and reinforcement from others. It is thus the team —not the star player—that creates ethical leadership success.

Implications for research abound. Above all, it highlights the importance of studying good governance by centring not just on the structural, institutionalised governance measures and systems that organisations have in place, but also on the expectations, experiences, understandings and perceptions that both internal and external stakeholders have of the extent to which good governance is embodied in the everyday practices of both sports leaders and their followers. Relevant questions for instance include how expectations and perceptions of ethical leadership are shaped by institutional conditions such as the commercialisation of sport, and how to ensure ethical leadership in amateur sport where volunteer coaches may already be hard to come by and resources are scarce. Furthermore, researchers should consider expanding both the selection of respondents and methods used to examine sport governance. Incorporating and juxtaposing multiple stakeholder perspectives and expectations helps in identifying the complexities and dilemmas leaders face in realising good governance. This requires richer methods such as interviews, participatory observation, and Q-methodology in addition to the more dominant quantitative methods used in ethical leadership today (Constandt et al. 2020; Heres & Lasthuizen 2012).

For practitioners, the implications lie foremost in the realisation that good governance can only be materialised in and through the practical actions of those involved—with sport leaders at the forefront. From coaches to board members, from amateur to professional sport, leaders must step up to the plate and pioneer the fostering of safe, ethical climates in which good governance is both valued and practiced. Simply expecting leaders to provide ethical leadership, however, is not enough. Ethical leadership takes a collective and deliberate effort. For ethical leadership to emerge and be sustained, sport organisations and sport governing bodies must encourage, train and facilitate ethical leadership skills while simultaneously investing in the moral decision-making abilities of athletes and staff as well as in HR policies, instruments and structural governance measures to support said individuals (e.g. Constandt et al. 2018). This includes freeing up time and resources to further develop the reflective, communicative and analytical skills of leaders and leader-to-be, to monitor the psychological safety that athletes, staff and other followers experience, and to take an honest and critical look at the incentives that sport leaders and their followers are exposed to and that drive their moral behaviour.

Note

1. Interestingly, Yukhymenko-Lescroart, Brown and Paskus (2015) also find that ethical leadership does not affect athletes' perceptions of their teammates' willingness to cheat when abusive supervision is controlled for. They interpret this result as an indication that the relative influence of each leadership style depends on alignment

in the valences (positive or negative) between the leadership behaviours and outcomes. In other words, positive, ethical leadership had a strong effect on positive outcomes compared with the negative style of supervision while abusive coaching behaviour more strongly predicted the negative outcome (willingness to cheat) compared to ethical leadership.

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