



Watching Sport: Aesthetics, Ethics and Emotion (Ethics and Sport)

Stephen Mumford

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Do we watch sport for pure dumb entertainment? While some people might do so, Stephen Mumford argues that it can be watched in other ways. Sport can be both a subject of high aesthetic values and a valid source for our moral education. The philosophy of sport has tended to focus on participation, but this book instead examines the philosophical issues around watching sport. Far from being a passive experience, we can all shape the way that we see sport.

Delving into parallels with art and theatre, this book outlines the aesthetic qualities of sport from the incidental beauty of a well-executed football pass to the enshrined artistic interpretation in performed sports such as ice-skating and gymnastics. It is argued that the purist literally sees sport in a different way from the partisan, thus the aesthetic perception of the purist can be validated. The book moves on to examine the moral lessons that are to be learned from watching sport, depicting it as a contest of virtues. The morality of sport is demonstrated to be continuous with, rather than separate from, the morality in wider life, and so each can inform the other. Watching sport is then recognized as a focus of profound emotional experiences. Collective emotion is particularly considered alongside the nature of allegiance. Finally, Mumford considers why we care about sport at all.

Addressing universal themes, this book will appeal to a broad audience across philosophical disciplines and sports studies.

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