



Sport: A Philosophical Inquiry

Professor Paul Weiss PhD

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In a wide-ranging study of unusual interest, Paul Weiss, Sterling Professor of Philosophy at Yale University, applies the principles and methods of philosophy to athletics. Every culture, he notes, has games of some kind; few activities seem to interest both children and young men as much as sports do; and few attract so many spectators, rich and poor. Yet none of the great philosophers, claiming to take all knowledge and being as their province, have made more than a passing reference to sport, in part, Professor Weiss suggests, because they thought that what pleased the vulgar was not worth sustained study by the leisured.

This seminal book breaks new ground and explores new paths: psychological and sociological forms of human behavior exhibited in games; the physiology of athletics, and the efforts of training and conditioning; and the motivation of athletics—the rhythm and aims of contests and games, and the meaning of team play. More importantly, however, Professor Weiss's unique contributions lie in his discussions of the distinct contributions that sport makes to civilization.

Professor Weiss discusses at length such topics as the Olympic Games and men and women as amateur and professional athletes—and their sacrifices, defeats, and humiliations. And he delineates the stages the athlete must go through in his progress toward self-completion.

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