

## The State of Play, Paul Bickley, Theos, 2014

### Introduction

I welcome any contribution to a Christian understanding of sport. Thinking theologically about sport – and encouraging others to do so is a great passion of mine. Sadly, *The State of Play* is a poor contribution to the field.

The last line of the first paragraph of the Executive Summary poses a great and important question: “What is an authentic Christian response to the growing significance of sport?” However, the report had already “got its retaliation in first” by referring – in the previous line - to “a growing ethical crisis in the world of sport”. Thus the question really means: “What is an authentic Christian response to the growing significance of sport, *which is in crisis and of which we should be deeply suspicious?*”

The report is about “sport” but never defines the term. There is one reference to “a theologically aware description of contemporary elite sport”. Elsewhere the report refers to “sport” or “the world of sport” but seems to mean professional sport or often Premier League football. The references to fan-power also seem to confirm that the report is focussing on Premier League football. The terms “player”, “athlete” and “sportsman” seem to be used interchangeably. Thus for the report, the world of sport seems to exclude club, school, elite amateur, recreational, student and disability sport – and arguably elite professional sport other than Premier League football.

While the report states: “we usually think of international competitions, great test series, or the biggest clubs in the biggest leagues – but this is incomplete, and whatever we think, say or do about sport must be capable of explaining and unpacking a diverse range of activities”, and again refers to the “need to pay attention not just to the very top tier of profession sport but also to the thousands who play professionally, still in the public eye but perhaps only in peripheral vision”, the focus seems to remain exclusively on elite professional sport and largely football.

I love sport. I have played, watched, administered and thought about sport all my life. I have derived immense pleasure from sport. Along with Lord Kinnaird I regularly “thank God for football”<sup>1</sup> and many other sports. I also believe that thanking God for sport is entirely appropriate, as sport and our ability to play it and enjoy it, are part of God’s creation.

The report has a very negative stance with regard to sport, referring to “the malaise of contemporary sport”, “sport’s moral failures”, “guilty of deep hypocrisy, abusing popular devotion for its own gain”, “the ill effects of this sporting context”, “the hotbed of the worst human behaviour” giving the reader “all the more reason to be suspicious of sport”. The danger of idolatry, pressure, poor behaviour on and off the field are all part of what the report calls: “the charge sheet” against sport. At one point the author writes: “We have neither the space nor the competence to establish beyond certainty that sport’s more unethical now than it was 20, 50 or 100 years ago”. But you feel that he would like to! While the report states “In conclusion we argue that an authentic theological response to sport is to celebrate it”, this welcome message is strangled by all the negativity and criticisms of sport.

The report consists of an executive summary followed by Introduction, View from the Boundary (theological reflections). The view from the dressing room (player interviews), Sports Chaplaincy (reflections on chaplaincy and partly based on interviews with chaplains) followed by Conclusions and Recommendations.

## Sweeping statements and generalisations

The style of the report is all too often sweeping statements and unsupported assertions or unreasonable extrapolations from limited evidence. Here are a few examples:

Chaplains “argued anecdotally that various forms of addiction – most often gambling – were prevalent in professional sport”. [*While there are certainly problems with gambling in professional football – see for example, the books by Paul Merson and Keith Gillespie<sup>ii</sup> – whether gambling can be said to be “prevalent in professional sport” is highly questionable. What is the evidence that gambling is prevalent in tennis, golf, athletics, Rugby League etc?*]

“We have argued that ‘sport’ has changed. Among the many challenges it faces is a loss of a sense of play. We have also noted a developing sense of ethical disruption around the institutions and individuals of sport. They are perceived to have lost connection with the values and aspirations of fans in a rush to ‘build global brands’”. [*This paragraph is a classic, which begs so many questions:*

*Sport – professional, amateur, all?*

*What are the “many challenges” sport faces (and are the Barclays Premier League, elite hockey, student sport, boys’ football, school netball, village cricket so similar that they can be lumped together; or do they really just mean Premier League football?)*

*Again does this alleged “ethical disruption” apply equally to all sports at all levels?*

*What research have they done to understand the “values and aspirations of fans?”]*

“In terms of the relationship between coaching staff and players, it seems that an athlete’s faith becomes part of the constant ‘discrimination’ which all professional athletes experience, mostly on their ability to contribute to a win”.

*It is absurd beyond belief to argue that all Christian professional athletes face “constant discrimination” on the basis of a little bit of anecdotal evidence<sup>iii</sup>.*

“Given the theological emphasis on the play ethic in most contemporary theological engagement”. [*This is a something of an over-simplification of the 10-15 important books on the subject*]<sup>iv</sup>.

“While the critique – lodged over recent years by Michael Novak and others that sport has lost its sense of play...” [*The phrase “Novak and others” is a weak argument. One might ask: Which others? The only theological references in the report are to Lincoln Harvey, Rob Ellis, Eric Bain-Selbo and Novak. As Novak’s book Joy of Sport was first published in 1976, it is hardly ‘recent’.*]

“Some theological voices – echoing the tradition of muscular Christianity – are inclined to highlight positive social impact of sport (team work, self-discipline and – sacrifice, courage and so on). This has been the tone, for instance, of recent Papal and Vatican engagements with sport”. [*I am staggered by the notion that 10 years work of the Vatican Sports Office, three Vatican conferences with published reports, books by Kelly, Lixey, Penrice and the innovative thinking of John Paul II are dismissed as highlighting “team-work and self-discipline”*]<sup>v</sup>.

Other overstated generalisations include:

“Now, however, people of goodwill - religious or otherwise - are increasingly conscious that they do not share the values embodied in sport and sporting institutions”.

“The stories of athletes like Lance Armstrong...are a microcosm of what the public perceive has happened to all of sport”.

“hardly a day passes without a new on-pitch controversy or personnel indiscretion hitting the back pages”.

## Theology

The author writes: “the root of the theological chord are the ideas of the transcendent possibilities of sport (and therefore a possible drift into idolatry)”. I would much rather start a theological approach to sport from the position of sport as a gift of the creator God, which, like all his gifts, is to be used for his glory<sup>vi</sup>.

The negative attitude to sport is not very surprising given that the author’s main theological influence, Lincoln Harvey, argues that professional sport is a corruption of sport and dismisses professional sportspeople as “prostitutes”. Lest I misrepresent him, this is what Lincoln Harvey writes:

“Our theological analysis shows that sport should not be professionalized, any more than worship should be professionalized...people should not be making a living leading worship, and neither should they make a living playing sport...We need to recognize that professional sport is not true sport. It mimics it at best, it destroys it at worst. The professional sportsperson is simply an actor or a prostitute. Either way, they are not a player...amateur sport is true sport; professional sport a corruption”<sup>vii</sup>.

It does rather beg the question: if you want to understand professional sport theologically – and the report seems only to address professional sport – why use as your theological adviser someone who dismisses professional sport?

The report says: “The essential point is that, for most theologians, who have sought to offer an account of modern sport, it is the absence or distortion of this sense of freedom which sport should offer which is their main complaint”. As with so much of the report I would say that this is a wild generalisation and oversimplification.

The report describes modern sport as experiencing “ludic diffusion” (sport has lost its sense of fun, joy and freedom). This is no doubt that for many professional sportspeople as their hobby has become a job, the perception of the game has changed and the sense of enjoyment diminished<sup>viii</sup>. Of the other hand, many, who have had to do a full-time job to earn their living before training several evenings a week and spending weekends at training camps or competition, have found real freedom in going professional.

However to say, as the report does, that the elite athletes interviewed “report, amongst other things, a sense of ‘ludic diffusion’ as they progress through their careers”, may be putting words into the interviewees’ mouths. You will ask a lot of professional sportspeople to describe their feelings about pro sport before hearing the words “ludic diffusion”!

At the same time I have spoken to many professional sportspeople who feel deeply privileged to be able to earn a living doing something they love. Philip Starbuck who played over 200 games as a professional footballer recalls an incident as a young player at Nottingham Forest. One of the senior players, Ian Bowyer, took him aside and pointed at an office block, visible from the training ground. “There are people in there working for a living”, Bowyer said, “never forget how lucky we are”<sup>ix</sup>.

The report asserts that “the changes which have taken place in sport cause an intensity of ludic diffusion beyond what might occur for a poet who manages to make living from his or her work”. Again I would ask how many poets, and for that matter, artists, musicians, dress-makers, designers, they have interviewed to enable them to say that the loss of fun and freedom is a bigger issue in professional sport than it other walks of creative life?

While the report focuses only on professional sport, I am more concerned at the trend towards losing the fun of play in youth sport. Patrick Kelly expresses the concern that in America the play element is in danger of disappearing from youth sport<sup>x</sup> and Steven Overman comments: “People used to play tennis, now that work on their backhand”<sup>xi</sup>.

## **Worship**

One of the great successes of the Christians in Sport movement over 30 years is to help thousands of Christians to see sport as part of their Christian life and an arena in which they can worship God. The words attributed to Eric Liddell in the 1980s film, *Chariots of Fire*, “God made me for a purpose but he also made me fast and when I run, I feel his pleasure”<sup>xii</sup> encapsulate what so many Christians at all levels feel about playing sport. It therefore seems odd in the extreme that a report prepared for Christians in Sport (and the Bible Society) should reject this fundamental part of the Christians in Sport view of sport.

The report, reflecting the views of Lincoln Harvey<sup>xiii</sup> states: “the Church ...has always insisted that “worship is worship and sport is sport”. Harvey is, of course, as entitled to his opinion as anyone else. The problem arises when this view – which to my knowledge has been universally rejected by UK sports ministry people who have read the argument – is put across as received wisdom.

I will quote just two examples from interviews that I have conducted with athletes. Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, 2008 and 2012 Olympic gold medallist in the 100 metres: “I hope that by me running He’ll get the glory and He’ll enjoy it as much as I am enjoying it...When I run, the first thing I tell myself is that ‘I hope He is pleased with my worship’ for running is my worship – my way of worshipping Him because he Has given me the talent.”<sup>xiv</sup>.

Anna Sharkey, 2012 Paralympian in goalball: “I can use my talent as almost worship, I suppose. Some people might sing, some people might dance but I can play goalball and praise God in that way”<sup>xv</sup>.

The balance in the report is somewhat restored when one of the interviewed players is quoted saying that sport is “the instrument that I can use to bring glory to him and shine my light” – although the report does not seem to notice how this is at variance with the view, put forward earlier, that sport cannot be worship

## **Player Interviews**

The chapter based on interviews is unsatisfactory. We read that the “a small number of confidential interviews with players” were carried out and that “even in the small number of interviewees we conducted, it became apparent that athletes’ experience differs from sport to sport, from club to club, and from individual to individual”. Without knowing how many interviews were carried out, in what sports, what gender balance, team sports or individual sports and how the data was analysed, it is difficult to take the data seriously.

Points are often put forward based on one comment by one interviewee. The problem here is that from the 100 or so interviews I have conducted with professional sportspeople, I could find a quote to support and another one to disagree with just about every point made here! This confirms the views of Ellis<sup>xvi</sup> and Watson and Parker<sup>xvii</sup> that there is a real need for more empirical research, carried out and analysed with academic rigour, on how Christian sportspeople view their sport.

The report states “Overall, they [interviewed athletes] tended to see their play as ‘work’”. Yes, in my experience most professional sportspeople see their job as work. And why

shouldn't they? Wanting to see professional sport as "play" is fraught with difficulty. Expecting a professional to experience the same element of play on a Saturday afternoon in a professional environment as two lawyers playing tennis after work is naïve in the extreme. The lawyers will only play if they want to and if the weather is favourable. The professional will train in rain, hail and snow. Professionals will train through injury because they are scared of losing their place in the team or of not being offered a new contract. Footballers may enjoy the ball related training but probably hate the running, intensive gym work and the repetitive drills. Playing a game on Saturday is probably still fun but the week between games is certainly work.

Only in very few sports and for a small minority is money the motivation. Certainly an average Premier League player is able to earn enough money to set himself up for life. On the other hand many professional sportspeople earn less as professional sportspeople than they could if they gave up and followed a different career. I think of:

- A lawyer who left the law practice to play and coach professional rugby;
- A dentist who gave up her profession to win an Olympic cycling medal at significant financial cost;
- An Olympian who won silver in London and who told me that had they known in 2008 that they would only win silver, they might have retired to start on a professional career in civvy street.
- Golfers and tennis players travelling from one tournament to the next barely covering their expenses.

I thought the report did not really understand the nature of competition<sup>xviii</sup>, which Olympic and World sprint champion Allyson Felix describes in this way "I love competition; I thrive on competition. I love competing against the best women in the world"<sup>xix</sup>. I asked Jonathan Edwards what his ambitions were – having broken the world record and won 2000 Olympic gold. He replied: "To go to Athens in four years - that would be fun. I have got a blank sheet of paper but I do enjoy athletics and I do enjoy competing. It is much more fun now that I have won the Olympics, having the pressure off. That is fun and I do enjoy it"<sup>xx</sup>. Another time Jonathan told me that he particularly loved a competition where he was behind with one jump to go and had to deliver on the last jump. It is noteworthy that Jonathan used the word "fun" three times and "enjoy" twice and how not having the pressure to prove himself – because he already had – increased the potential for fun and enjoyment.

The enjoyment of pressure or performing well, of using in a game situation a skill or set-play that you have honed by hours of practice, winning by playing better or winning by being tactically superior, the ability to do what you are capable under immense pressure – like Beckham's last minute free-kick goal against Greece to take England into the 2002 World Cup finals or Pádraig Harrington's 272-yard five-wood to within four feet of the flag on the 71st hole of the 2008 Open Championship<sup>xxi</sup> – is the essence of professional sport. Asking if it is work or play is way too simplistic.

The report says: "It's clear that a strong distinction between work and play is difficult to sustain". I think that is true – certain it is in my experience as someone who works on the periphery of sport. Perhaps it is naïve to look for one.

The report, noting that one interviewee had spoken of fear, adds: "the use of the word 'fear' highlights both sport's potential for idolatrous claims and the way it alienates those in the sporting world from each other". The paradoxical witness of Scripture is that it is Yahweh who merits fearfulness, yet also in Christ fear is abolished ("fear not, for I have overcome the world" John 16.33). Christians rightly have qualms for any system which depends on or manufactures fear".

First of all I have absolutely no idea why a sportsman's fear should highlight the risk of idolatry. Of course knowing that God is in control is a great antidote to fear but to suggest that Christians (whether sportspeople or now) should never experience fear is naïve. Again I have no idea why the author thinks that sport "depends on or manufactures fear".

As I thought about fear in sport, I thought of down-hill skiing, motor-racing, a batsman facing a 100 mile an hour delivery. I also recalled John Eldridge's story of an American judge in his 60s "We were sailing off the coast of Bermuda a few years ago, when we were hit by a northeaster (a raging storm). Really, it came up out of nowhere. Twenty-foot swells in a thirty-foot homemade boat. I thought we were all going to die" A pause for dramatic effect, "It was the best time of my life"<sup>xxii</sup>.

I would also challenge the idea that competitive sport alienates people in the sporting world from each other. Thank of that wonderful moment between Andrew Flintoff and Brett Lee at Edgbaston in 2005<sup>xxiii</sup>. Harry Rednapp tells a lovely story of Roy Keane and Patrick Veira meeting for the first time since their epic Premier League confrontations and having nothing but respect for each other<sup>xxiv</sup>. Even the title Hyland's<sup>xxv</sup> excellent article makes the point.

## Chaplaincy

The section on sport chaplaincy<sup>xxvi</sup> is partly based on interviews with "a number of sports chaplains working in a range of settings throughout the UK". No information is given on the number, gender, sports covered nor method of analysis. While this is slightly speculative, in this section there are eight references to he/his and three to their, which makes one wonder if all chaplains were male. I also wondered if the interviewees are all club chaplains rather than chaplains to sports (eg golf or athletics) or if the ministry of Christians in Sport field-workers or Major Sports Event Chaplains have been included.

The statement: "While their role is primarily conceived, even by chaplains themselves, as pastoral rather than evangelistic (more, in the US) still less 'prophetic'" makes one wonder what the comparison with USA is based on if they spoke to no American chaplains.

One interesting issue raised in this section is whether or not chaplains should have a 'prophetic' ministry, which would lead them to "to challenge or critique the overarching values of a club or of players". They are not the first to raise this issue<sup>xxvii</sup>. This is a reasonable question to raise. My own view is that a chaplain is primarily there to serve and that a 'prophetic ministry' is likely to detract from the main focus. In my experience, most sports chaplains feel very loyal of their club/team. I think of an American chaplain who waited in the car-park – in the middle of the night - to congratulate the players as they returned home after achieving their first win of a difficult season. Reflections on the moral issues of sport are perhaps more easily undertaken by theologians who are truly independent of the structures of sport.

The report states: "The Christian witness to players must be different than the thin and dry moralism, which has historically proven so attractive, in favour the kind of pastoral support required for those suffering from the ill effects of this sporting context". Having just finished a study of the history of chaplaincy<sup>xxviii</sup>, I confess to having absolutely no idea what the "thin and dry moralism" is, to which they refer.

## A sporting Decalogue

The report ends with what it calls *A sporting Decalogue* (Ten commandments of sport for the 21<sup>st</sup> century). Most of it is common sense and at times reads like a parents' code of conduct for a boys' football team. In keeping with the rest of the report, it is written pretty negatively; the first words are "Don't take sport too seriously".

Two of the ten are worthy of comment. “4 Do things that are nothing to do with sport. The best of your time belongs to God, your family and your neighbour”. Does this imply a dualism? There are two ways to spend your time: 1 play sport; 2 serving God and loving your family and neighbour. I will show you a better way – serve God and love your neighbour as you play sport.

10 says: “Find a sport you love to play and play it. Play for the sake of the game, not for what it can give you”. I am not sure this is realistic. Research has shown that people play sport for friendship/camaraderie, for fitness and for better self image. I don’t see any of these outcomes as impure.

## **Issues**

The report raises a number of interesting issues without dealing with them satisfactorily. (Of course, one recognizes that there is a limit to what one can cover in 42 pages but the result can be that complex issues appear to have been dismissed in a sentence.) Here are some examples

### **Sunday Sport**

There are references to Sunday Sport including: “A decision not to play on Sunday is rare and seen deeply controversial (sic) and likely to adversely affect a professional career”. Surely it is obviously the case that an unwillingness to work on Sundays will adversely affect one’s career in the leisure industry, retail or transport sectors as much as in sport<sup>xxix</sup>. The evidence is sparse as I am only aware of one current elite professional sports person who does not play on Sunday. Sunday Sport is a much bigger issue for the club player and especially in youth sport.

### **Taking one for the team**

The issue of whether or not a Christian player can deliberately commit a foul in the interests of the team, the so-called professional foul comes out in one interview. It is a question that I have written about and have interviewed players about. It is a real issue for the Christian player and a complex one and an area with which many Christian players have struggled but not one which can be dealt with through one quotation from one player<sup>xxx</sup>.

### **Elite sportspeople are expected to be role models.**

I have never really understood why society should expect that because a young man has the ability to control and kick a football, he is a role model for behaviour and an expert witness on social, religious or political matters<sup>xxxi</sup>. The report assumes that they are but does not make the case as to why they are.

I felt that there are a number of important omissions in the report:

### **Disability**

The lack of any consideration of disability sport is disappointing – although understandable if the focus is entirely on Premier League football. The one reference (in a footnote) - as follows - could be seen as somewhat patronising.

“Disability sport paralympic movement could be said to perform a similar function, chastening elite/able bodied sport for its valorisation of physical perfection which turns out after all not to be essential to sport”.

As I read this, I thought of athletics in Britain, where disabled athletes train alongside non-disabled athletes, in the same training group, under the same coach, funded in the same way. Sports, which only exist in the disability category – Goalball, Bocchia etc – of course, operate differently. My experience of working a little in disability sport is that disabled athletes see themselves primarily as athletes and want to be treated as athletes – not seen as existing to chasten “real” sport.

I well remember asking multiple wheelchair marathon winner, Tatyana McFadden, how she perceived herself. She replied: “I have always seen myself as an athlete. Playing sport as a young person and playing multiple sports I have always used the same equipment – we use the same track, we get awarded the same medals, wear the same uniforms. I may just need to use a wheelchair. Others may need to use a prosthetic. But the training that we go through is the same for every single athlete. Training is very hard. Sometimes I think I can lift more than Olympic athletes can lift with their arm. We are all the same people where we have a physical disability... I have always considered myself an elite athlete and an advocate for others with disabilities. I have never seen myself as ‘disabled’. I think I am very able in everything I do”<sup>xxxii</sup>.

## Olympics

The London Olympics and Paralympics of 2012 were a magnificent occasion, taking place before sell-out crowds and generally making the nation proud. In the case of the Paralympics the event showcased the achievements of our amazing paralympians and arguably changed the perception of disability in the UK. Yet the only reference to the Olympics in the report was a bizarre reference (unsupported by any evidence) to the “dubious administration of IOC” – whatever that means - and a reference to the content of the opening ceremony of the Games.

## Conclusion

There is a need for Christians to engage with the world of sport. However, this must not be done in condemnatory way or the church will be dismissed as the new Puritans. If you believe that sport is a gift from God and that we can and must worship God in sport as in all aspects of life, then we will approach sport positively and with thankfulness. There is a great need for engagement in sport at all levels from professional to club and recreational level – as players, coaches and administrators or chaplains. Let’s do it!

<sup>i</sup> The quotation is from Lord Kinnaird and is used as the title of Peter Lupson’s book on the Christian origins of Premier League football clubs. Lupson, Peter, Thank God for Football, London, SPCK, 2006 and Thank God for Football, the illustrated companion, London, SPCK, 2010.

<sup>ii</sup> How not to be a professional footballer, Merson, Paul with Allen, Matt, London, HarperSport, 2011; Gillespie, Keith, How not to be a football millionaire, Liverpool, Trinity Mirror 2013

<sup>iii</sup> Of course such incidents do occur and I refer to one, quoting Christians in Sport’s General Director, Graham Daniels, talking about an incident from his playing days in: Weir, Stuart, What the book says about sport, Oxford, BRF, 2000, Pages 51-52

<sup>iv</sup> For a list of books see <http://www.veritesport.org/index.php?page=topten>

<sup>v</sup> For a list of Roman Catholic publications on sport see [http://www.veritesport.org/index.php?page=Catholic\\_theology](http://www.veritesport.org/index.php?page=Catholic_theology)

<sup>vi</sup> See for example Weir, Stuart, What the book says about sport, Oxford, BRF, 2000, pp 30 ff; Daniel, Graham, and Weir, J Stuart Born to Play, Frampton House Publications, Bicester, 2004. Page 13ff. Both these books were written when I worked for Christians in Sport and reflect the philosophy of that organization.

<sup>vii</sup> Harvey, Lincoln, A Brief Theology of Sport, London, SCM, 2014, Pages 104-5

<sup>viii</sup> The dilemma – “I hate tennis; I can’t give it” is brilliantly expressed in Agassi, Andre, Open, London, Harper Collins, 2009.

<sup>ix</sup> Personal conversation by Stuart Weir with Phil Starbuck.

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- <sup>x</sup> Kelly, Patrick, *Catholic perspectives on sports (From medieval to modern times)*, New York / Mahwah, NJ Paulist Press, 2012 Pages 25-26
- <sup>xi</sup> Overman, Steven J, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sport , How Calvinism and Capitalism Shaped America's Games*, Macon, Mercer University Press, 2011 Page 213
- <sup>xii</sup> While the line not a quote from Liddell but a line written by scriptwriter, Colin Welland, it probably reflects what Liddell thought.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Harvey, Lincoln, *A Brief Theology of Sport*, London, SCM, 2014
- <sup>xiv</sup> Personal interview with Shelly-Anne Fraser-Pryce by Stuart Weir in Birmingham, August 2012.
- <sup>xv</sup> Personal interview with Anna Sharkey by Stuart Weir in 2012.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Ellis, Robert, *The Games People Play: theology, religion and sport*, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014, Page 283
- <sup>xvii</sup> Watson, Nick J and Parker, Andrew, *Sport and the Christian Religion*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014 Pages 69, 119-120
- <sup>xviii</sup> In contrast the Church of Scotland has just produced an excellent report: *Striving together: celebrating competitiveness in sport*, available at [http://www.srtp.org.uk/assets/uploads/Striving\\_together\\_Full\\_report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.srtp.org.uk/assets/uploads/Striving_together_Full_report_FINAL.pdf)
- <sup>xix</sup> Personal interview with Allyson Felix by Stuart Weir, 2007.
- <sup>xx</sup> Personal interview with Jonathan Edwards Stuart Weir, 2000.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Pdraig Harrington's five-wood at Birkdale - the greatest shot ever?, *Guardian* 10 July 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/lawrence-donegan-golf-blog/2009/jul/10/golf-pdraig-harrington>
- <sup>xxii</sup> Eldridge, John, *Wild at heart*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001, Page 13
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Included in the 20 greatest Ashes moments at <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2013/jun/24/20-great-ashes-moments-andrew-flintoff>
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Rednapp, Harry, *A man walks on to a football pitch*, London, Ebury Press, 2014, Pages 288-9
- <sup>xxv</sup> Hyland, Drew, "Competition and friendship", *Journal of Philosophy of sport*, 1978, 27-38. See also Grisham, John, *Bleachers*, Arrow 2004.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> For some reason the report mostly – but not always – refers to "Sport chaplaincy" rather than the more usual UK term "Sports chaplaincy"
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Krattenmaker, Tom. *Onward Christian Athletes (Turning Ballparks into pulpits and players into Preachers)*. Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield., 2010 Page 103
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Weir, J Stuart, *Sports chaplaincy: A global overview* in Parker, A., Watson, N.J. and White, J.B. *Sports Chaplaincy: Trends, Issues and Debates*, Farnham, Ashgate 2015
- <sup>xxix</sup> For a helpful discussion of the Sunday sport issue see *The Sunday Sport dilemma* at <http://www.christiansinsport.org.uk/search.asp?search=The+Sunday+Sport+Dilemma> and *Never on Sunday* at <http://www.veritesport.org/index.php?page=neveronsundays>
- <sup>xxx</sup> See *Competition as relationship* at [http://www.veritesport.org/downloads/theology\\_of\\_sport/Competition\\_as\\_Relationship.pdf](http://www.veritesport.org/downloads/theology_of_sport/Competition_as_Relationship.pdf) and Weir, Stuart, *More Than Champions*, London, Harper Collins 1993 Page 62ff
- <sup>xxxi</sup> A similar view to mine is raised by Pete Nicholas in *Role models or Renegades* <http://www.christiansinsport.org.uk/news.asp?itemid=5802&itemTitle=Role+Models+or+Renegades%3F+-+The+State+of+Play+of+Elite+Sportspeople&section=22&sectionTitle=Stories>
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Telephone interview with Tatyana McFadden by Stuart Weir, 2012.