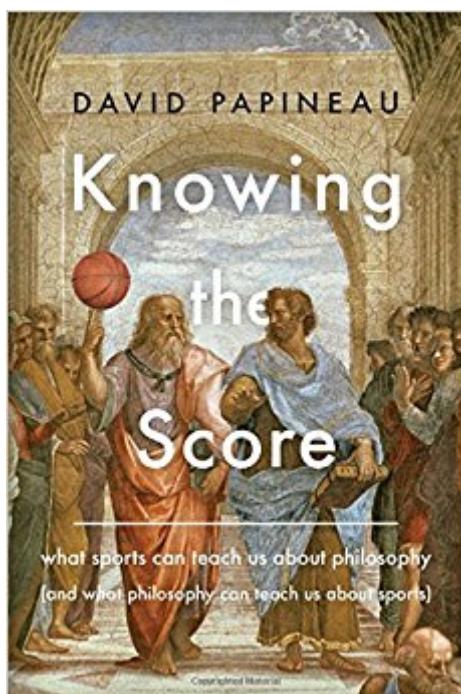


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# Knowing The Score: What Sports Can Teach Us About Philosophy (And What Philosophy Can Teach Us About Sports)



## Synopsis

In *Knowing the Score*, philosopher David Papineau uses sports to illuminate some of modern philosophy's most perplexing questions. As Papineau demonstrates, the study of sports clarifies, challenges, and sometimes confuses crucial issues in philosophy. The tactics of road bicycle racing shed new light on questions of altruism, while sporting family dynasties reorient the nature v. nurture debate. Why do sports competitors choke? Why do fans think God will favor their team over their rivals? How can it be moral to deceive the umpire by framing a pitch? From all of these questions, and many more, philosophy has a great deal to learn. An entertaining and erudite book that ranges far and wide through the sporting world, *Knowing the Score* is perfect reading for armchair philosophers and Monday morning quarterbacks alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wall Street Journal: "Mr. Papineau's engaging book takes a look at a philosophical problem presented by a sport and links it to phenomena in the wider world."

David Papineau is Professor of Philosophy of Natural Science at King's College London and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the City University of New York. He is the author of eight philosophical books, and has served as president of the Aristotelian Society, the Mind Association, and the British Society for the Philosophy of Science. He is also a keen amateur sportsman, and has competed as an adult at soccer, rugby, golf, squash, cricket, field hockey, and sailing, without noteworthy success in any. He spends as much time as he can on the Blackwater Estuary in Essex,

where he and his family have a house and a number of small boats.;

If you like sports and would like to think about the topic in a bit more depth, *Knowing the Score* is a good place to start. The author, David Papineau, is a philosopher, but more importantly, an avid fan and amateur player of a variety of sports, who finds substance in the subject matter. He begins with a prudent dissection of the neurophysiology of reaction times, described in suitable layman's terms, and goes on, in subsequent chapters to discuss how planning, pattern recognition, and thinking may play roles in lightning quick maneuvers, and then takes a turn at addressing the meaning of being a fan, team loyalty, and team dynamics. Here is where he upstages decades of decision theory by showing that humans don't just make decisions based on individual benefits and risks. Team members, professional or amateur, often act selflessly to advance the shared goals of their team and sometimes of those devoted to their sport. How could economists and decision theory experts have overlooked this? Hume says that philosophers never balance between profit and honesty because their decisions are general and neither their passions nor imaginations are interested in their objects. Papineau fortunately ignores this analysis, giving some breathing room to legions of armchair philosophers who do their best to understand things they find of interest. Could he have discussed the cognitive aspects of practice endurance? The elements of what constitutes team chemistry? How coaching enhances performance? The value, and, possible unattractiveness, of being able to root against as well as for a team? Yes, but then what would he do for his next book? By the way, the discussion of yips, although of considerable interest, overlooks the possibility of underlying neurologic dysfunction (dystonia). In any case, a great read, well suited for summer vacation or the interminable lull between seasons of one's favorite sport.

Great text

Bought this for my son-in-law after seeing a review in Wall St Journal. No feedback yet, but book came promptly.

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