

# Handout 3.5: The 100m Dash Game

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## 1. Brown and the Free Choice to do PEDs

Recall that Brown rejects both of these claims:

**Position #1.1:** PED use is morally wrong and should be prohibited because not everyone has access to PEDs.

**Position #2:** PED use is morally wrong and should be kept against the rules because using PEDs is unhealthy and dangerous.

In other words, Brown says we don't have a good reason to prohibit the use of PEDs. But, Brown goes even further by saying that prohibiting PEDs *would be morally wrong*. Here is his argument:

### **Argument #1: Argument from Human Freedom**

P1: We cannot reduce our activity of playing/competing to certain instinctive (animalistic) dispositions, e.g., competing in a race is not a *fight or flight response* (see pp.19-20).

P2: The activity of playing/competing in sports is a free (rational) choice, an act of exaltation, an act aimed to explore the limits of our strength (see p.19).

P3: We should not interfere with human freedom (unless it causes harm to others).

C: Therefore, the rules of sport should not prohibit the use of PEDs.

While we might take issue with **P3 by itself**, let's focus on **P2 and P3 together**. These premises (**along with the conclusion**) assume the following:

**P2.5:** The use of PEDs is a free, rational, and informed choice by profession athletes.

If we make an **informed** choice, then we have a reasonable understanding of the consequences of taking PEDs (we know the relative risks and benefits). If our choice is **rational**, then we have various options open to us that we considered and one option is chosen over others on the basis of some reason. What is meant by a **free choice** is a tricky issue. Let's say there are three conditions:

**(1) Not blocked by physical constraints:** Suppose you are driving and have the option of turning **left** or **right**. If there are no physical obstacles to the right or the left (e.g. a barricade), then it is up to you which way you want to go. In this case, you are *free from physical constraint*.

**(2) Not driven by instincts:** Suppose you are driving and have the option of turning **left** or **right**. Now suppose that while there are no barricades blocking your way, there are two men on the right. One is holding an assault rifle (pointed at you), while the other is holding a sign that says "if you turn right, you die!" Before you have the chance to decide, the man with the assault rifle begins shooting at you. You quickly turn left and speed away. Here we would say your choice was *instinctive* and *not free*.

**(3) Not forced by significant coercion:** Suppose you receive a call from a stranger who claims to have your family at gunpoint. He tells you that you if you don't tell him your ATM password, he will shoot one of your family members. In this case you are being *extorted*, i.e. significantly pressured, threatened, or "forced" to do an action against your will.

## 2. The 100M Dash Game: Are Athletes Making a “Free” Choice to Use PEDs?

**CDQ#1:** After playing the 100m Dash Game, what sorts of *pressures* did you encounter to use PEDs?

**CDQ#2:** After the first race of the 100m Dash Game, what was your reaction concerning whether the other runners used PEDs?

**CDQ#3:** Can you think of other pressures that professional athletes face to use PEDs?

**CDQ#4 (KEY QUESTION):** Brown says that athletes are making a free choice when they use PEDs. In thinking of all of the pressures we have considered, would you say that athletes are making a **free** choice or is choice is coerced (obviously no one has a gun to their head)?

**CDQ#5:** We hold athletes morally, legally, and financially responsible for using PEDs. They are characterized as doing something *morally wrong* when they use PEDs, and they are punished when caught, e.g. lost of sponsorships, salary, reputation. Recalling Kant’s retributivism, which says that the punishment for a moral wrongdoing must be proportionate, does the *punishment fit the crime*? How might the *correctionalist* (utilitarian) view this issue?

**CDQ#6:** Let’s consider this issue outside of professional athletics. There is intense pressure to succeed in school and in the working world. Do you ever feel as though you *need* to use some drug to succeed? What sorts of things are pressuring you to succeed? Supposing you do use drugs to get ahead, who is morally responsible: you for using drugs to get ahead or society for creating an environment that “forced” you to use drugs?