Self-Glorification and its Others:
The Discursive-Moral Management of Sports Management

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Comment [Sct1]:

Abstract

The question of the relation(s) between sport and everyday life is a fraught one — ranging from traditional claims that sport is a form of escape from everyday life, to the view that sport is a deep part of the ontological conditions of being human. In this analysis, we offer an alternative position based on the inspection of actual everyday discursive materials concerning sport and its management. While 'high theory' might consider the sports and letters pages of newspapers as trivial texts and, therefore, beneath the scope of serious intellectual reflection, we try to show how the very ordinariness of these materials can furnish a way into the 'sports-life' controversy via their reciprocal involvement in the practical management of moral character.

Comment [Sct2]: Section break

Sport is a social drama ... but it is also a cultural drama, and it demonstrates how a group draws on rituals and symbols as well as language to face a crisis.... [A]s Euripides so well understood, questions of control, power, and supremacy are relevant, and the language of sport in all its slangy and facetious style offers us a fascinating window into the very soul of our existence. (Segrave, 1997, pp. 218-219)

WHY? 'The judgement was made with the knowledge that the club needs a coach committed, in the long-term, to Perth, Western Australia. It was as simple as that. Bernd had not indicated he was prepared to make such a long-term commitment and I believe he would always be attached to Germany in some way. There would come a day when Bernd felt the need to return to his homeland'.
(Nick Tana quoted by Mel Moffat in The West Australian, 21st February, 2000)

Two apparently separate things here, then: a scholarly claim about sport as a reflection of 'the very soul of our existence' and a perfectly ordinary piece of press reportage on a sports-management controversy. And the only link, it would seem, is something rather tenuous called 'sport'. So how could a 'philosophy' of human existence and the day-to-day business of sports management be connected? This paper suggests a way in which they may, in fact, be connected — by rethinking 'the very soul of our existence' as a matter concerning the social — that is, discursive-moral — management of everyday life (thereby re-viewing the 'soul' as a thoroughly pragmatic concept) and by re-thinking sport as an instance of how we see (that is, account for) ourselves in terms of self-justification and appraisal by others.

Setting the scene
Perth Glory Football (or 'soccer') Club has been one of the most successful teams in the Australian National Soccer League (NSL), especially in terms of the crowds attracted to its games. The club regularly out-performs other NSL teams by an attendance factor of four and, in the uniquely Australian system of league finals play-offs, has attracted crowds of over 40,000 with consequent gates of over $800,000. A main reason for this is that, traditionally, Australian soccer teams have closely identified with particular 'ethnic' communities (especially the Greek, Italian and

former-Yugoslavian communities that represent a substantial part of post-war migration to Australia), thus limiting supporters to members of those communities. By contrast, the Glory have effectively de-ethnicised the club, thereby drawing broad community support, albeit in the most isolated English-speaking city in the world. Yet at the same time, the club has also attracted Perth's strongly-present British migrant population, bringing an atmosphere of British soccer to its games. Chanting and singing (often to the chagrin of ABC-TV commentators) is a regular feature of Glory games — by comparison with the studied silence of poorly-attended games in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. So a good deal of money has flowed through the turnstiles via a good management decisions in the early days. However, given all of that, the stakes have recently risen beyond what might have been anticipated for such a locally successful club.

That is, on 16th February 2000, the Chairman and majority shareholder of the Glory, Nick Tana, precipitated what was described in the media as a major 'crisis' (Moffat, 2000a; cf Moffat, 2000b; 2000c) for the club by announcing that he was not going to offer successful German coach, Bernd Stange, a renewal of his contract — not that Stange had been asked whether or not he wanted the contract renewed (in these days of almost-instant coach turnovers). In the following three weeks, even after the story left the front page of the State's daily newspaper,[1] sports reporting in print and electronic media in Western Australia, as well as the business and letters pages, were dominated by the story of Stange's 'sacking' (Keddie, 2000) and his eventual reinstatement after a vociferous campaign by Perth Glory supporters against Tana's decision.

An everyday story of everyday sports (mis)management perhaps? While obviously being a story of intense interest to Perth Glory fans, it might be thought that the peculiar story of Stange's 'dismissal' and eventual 'reinstatement' is surely of minor scholarly interest. However, this may not be the case: if we look in detail at the coverage of the Stange story in The West Australian to illustrate the way in which a serious study of (the reporting of) everyday life can offer sports studies a critical and reflexive perspective on the discipline, an appreciation of the inevitable and inescapable interplay of 'scientific' and 'everyday' knowledges, and the place that these knowledges occupy in our culture. This sort of qualitative study also

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1.   Moffat (2000c) 'Glory days over as Stange dumped', The West Australian, 17th February, p.1.

promises to make available a much wider set of understandings about the manner in which our culture organises knowledge about persons, about their psychological makeup, and — crucially — about the everyday organisation of sociality, of the moral life of a culture.

This paper, then, draws on the emergent qualitative approach called 'discursive psychology' (Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Edwards, 1995, 1997; Wetherell and Potter, 1992) and demonstrates its practical application. While qualitative approaches are not entirely foreign to sports studies, quantitative approaches tend to be more common. A brief review of the published literature suggests that Hallinan's (1994, p.10) plea: 'that we should not underestimate the sociocultural influence of "doing" sport science', has not been widely heard in the mainstream of the disciplines. However, the literature does contain a small — and extraordinarily theoretically disparate — corpus of 'qualitative' papers.[2]

In general, qualitative studies have analysed the place of sport in popular culture, and the reciprocal influences of culture and sport upon each other. Very little work has taken the discursive psychological approach adopted here and asked what these analyses can tell us specifically about the nature of persons, and their moral entitlements, in the particular cultures under investigation. Where these studies agree, however, is in their understanding of sport as a peculiarly sensitive index of a culture. For example, in Lukes' (2000) analysis of sports broadcasting, it is suggested that: 'athletics can be a window to broader cultural issues, but so can the way in which athletic events are transmitted to fans .... [A] rising arrogance among sports announcers ... relate[s] to American culture in general' (p. 78). Similarly, in a study of the prevailing metaphors in the contemporary language of sport, Segrave (1997) draws together an account of the way in which sport is routinely talked about in Anglophone cultures (in terms of sex, war or machinery) with a philosophical inquiry into culture informed by Nietzschean and feminist analyses, to argue that, as we have seen: 'the language of sport ... offers us a fascinating window into the very soul of our existence' (p.219). Likewise, Staurowsky (1998), citing Jansen and Sabo (1994, p.1), argues that sports metaphors are: 'crucial rhetorical resources for mobilizing the patriarchal values that construct, mediate, and maintain ... hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity'.

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2.   See also Miller (1990); Scambler and Jennings (1998); Tyler-Eastman and Billings (1999); MacAloon (1996.)

Published studies' levels of analysis vary from the extremely fine-grained to more wide-ranging criticisms of entire genres of sports discourse such as Eskes et al's (1998) examination of women's 'fitness' magazines. Their study of the 'discourse of empowerment' in these texts employs the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis (see Fairclough, 1993), and draws extensively on the work of Foucault and Marcuse, to identify the manner in which: 'by co-opting feminist ideals, fitness texts encourage readers to concentrate on their physical selves, specifically physical beauty, not health, at the expense of true physical health and gains in the social arena' (1998, p.317). Hughson's (2000) work, on the other hand, draws on longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork with the Bad Blues Boys — a group of young Croatian-Australian soccer fans from the western suburbs of Sydney — in his analysis of the social reproduction of masculinity as a social and cultural identity via sports-team allegiance. At the other end of the analytic spectrum, McHoul's (1997) analysis draws upon the work of Sacks (1995) and later work in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (see ten Have, 1999; Psasthas, 1995) to examine the morally problematic use of the categorical 'We won' by the Australian team coach, as swimmer Duncan Armstrong won the 200 metre finals at the 1988 Olympic Games. This analysis demonstrates the way in which: 'the everyday techniques [of sociality] of the sporting arena ... are, at one and the same time, identical with those used everywhere else in the culture and unique to sport. Sport is neither completely separate from everyday life nor is it quite "ordinary" life as usual' (p.320). The present paper elaborates and amplifies this view via a further corpus of everyday materials.

By contrast, much of the existing sports science literature takes its subject matter as an a priori given. Studies of expert-novice differences in tennis skills, comparative analyses of aggressive play across sports such as ice hockey and basketball and experimental studies of soccer goalkeepers' reaction times all presuppose sport as an unproblematic aspect of human experience and, moreover, study these fragmentary aspects of sports performance in isolation from the matrix of morality, culture and society. It seems to be clear, however, that if we take the place of sport in everyday life as the primary site of analysis, detailed inspection of naturally-occurring materials can reveal the precise nexus between the social organisation of sport and the everyday management of morality.

Preliminary to the analysis

As we have noted, the ending of Bernd Stange's appointment as Perth Glory's coach caused considerable controversy in Western Australia. The ensuing societal 'conversation' (Goldhagen, 1996) in the print media between sports journalists, newspaper editors, their readers, business commentators and the discursively distributed dialogue between Glory fans and the key players in the issue — Bernd Stange and Nick Tana — illustrate several of the key issues raised by discursive psychology. Two of these issues will be dealt with here: firstly the management of moral accountability in talk by the attribution of 'psychological' traits or states to others, and by the rhetorical organisation of the talk making these attributions; and, secondly, the management of stake and interest in the production of versions of events. What is analytically at issue here, then, is not why Tana 'really' decided to dispense with Stange's services, nor what either party's 'real' psychological states, decision-making processes or motivations were. Such matters are, in principle, not available empirically. Rather, what is of interest to discursive psychologists is the manner in which such purported social scientific 'things' as 'motivations', emotion states such as 'homesickness' or 'attachment', and cognitive skills or attributes such as 'judgement' or 'expert knowledge of football' are brought to bear in everyday life and texts in order to achieve specific social actions.

Analysis 1: rationality, accountability and self-justification

Since the arrival of 'Reaganomics' and 'Thatcherism' in the early 1980's, so the story goes, economic and business life have generally been constructed (at least rhetorically) as essentially 'rational' matters. Indeed the general discourse of economic rationalism may have spread far beyond the commercial sector to encompass much of social and cultural life (Fairclough, 1993; Swales and Rogers, 1995; Rapley and Ridgway, 1998) and, arguably, it has become part of the stock of commonsense knowledge in mainstream Western cultures. As such, one might therefore expect that major decisions about a sports team — such as terminating the appointment of a highly successful, charismatic and popular coach — could be taken, purely, simply and uncontroversially, as a rational matter of business management: with decisions informed solely by a cool-headed appraisal of the good of the club. But perhaps matters are not this straightforward and cannot be explained solely in terms of the operation of macro-discourses such as 'economic rationalism'. What we

see in Extract 1, where Glory chairman Nick Tana's account of events is quoted (in what is presented as direct reported speech by <u>The West Australian</u>) is the way in which Tana attends to producing <u>two distinct types</u> of psycho-logic in accounting for and justifying his decision to precipitate Stange's departure.[3]

> Extract 1: WHY?[4]
> (Nick Tana, quoted in <u>The West Australian</u>, 21st February, 2000)
>
> 1 'The judgement was made with the knowledge that the club needs a coach
> 2 committed, in the long-term, to Perth, Western Australia. It was as simple as that.
> 3 Bernd had not indicated he was prepared to make such a long-term commitment
> 4 and I believe he would always be attached to Germany in some way. There would
> 5 come a day when Bernd felt the need to return to his homeland'.

It is of note that Tana appeals (in line 1) to at least two, rational, psychological states of his own (judgement and knowledge) as the grounds for his 'simple' decision. Ending Stange's contract is a straightforward business decision based in what is <u>known</u>, and is contingent upon and subsequent to ratiocination (<u>judgement</u>). By contrast, however, Stange's psychological state is constructed rather differently from this: Tana implies (lines 3-5) that (by contrast with some ideal-type coach 'needed' by the club), Stange lacks 'commitment' to Perth as a result of his competing 'attachment' to Germany, and his 'feel[ing] the need' to return to 'his homeland'. By contrast with Tana's self-glorification of his own accountably rational grounds for his actions, Stange is characterised by an appeal to studied vagueness: he <u>would</u> be attached to Gerrmany only 'in some way'.

Stange's <u>psychological state</u> (as opposed, for example, to his technical qualities as a coach or his contribution to the financial success of the club) is thus produced as the primary condition for Tana's decision and, notably, Tana's account of Stange's psychological state is couched entirely in what are <u>emotional</u> and hence directly counter-rational terms. Such a contrastive construction serves to produce Tana as, indeed, a dispassionate business decision-maker first and foremost, but one who is equally 'humane'. That is, he constructs himself as solicitous and understanding of Stange's primæval emotional 'needs': his putative homesickness and his devotion to his fatherland. He, Tana, understands the inevitability of these

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3.   See Holt (1996) for a discussion of the rhetorical uses of reported speech in everyday conversation.
4.   All extracts are reproduced from <u>The West Australian</u>. Numbering has been added for ease of reference.

counter-rational, emotional, needs over-riding Stange's 'commitment' to the Glory. The one possibly counter-rational psychological state that Tana acknowledges for <u>himself</u> in justifying his own actions — namely his 'belief' that Stange would always be attached to Germany — is promptly qualified by the contention that 'there <u>would</u> come a day when Bernd felt the need to return to his homeland' (emphasis added).

Note, here, how Tana shifts the tense and mood of his account of his practical reasoning. Until line 4, the talk glosses what Tana 'knows' about the required level of 'commitment' and, contrastively, Stange's perceived shortfall against this ideal requirement by virtue of something he has <u>not</u> said. At line 4, however, the tense moves to the present ('I believe', rather than the more expectable 'I believed') and to the modal ('he would', '[t]here would'), giving a sense that Stange's psychological state will have the strong possibility of an inevitable and negative practical consequence — a shift of countries. The chain of reasoning goes as follows: REQUIRED COMMITMENT (knowledge claim) —> ABSENCE OF REQUIRED COMMITMENT BY STANGE (inference from the absence of its being explicitly stated) —> PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (of Stange as a consequence of the two previous moves) —> PRACTICAL-LOGICAL CONCLUSION (Stange 'would' leave Perth) —> ONLY LOGICAL SOLUTION (Stange's contract should be discontinued). In this way, Tana is able to self-justify his decision in terms of an ethno-psychological assessment of Stange's 'inner' condition, its basis in 'fact', and its likely outcomes.

This deployment of commonsensical understandings of psychological states as warrants for (and self-justifications of) action is also to be seen in Extract 2. Of note here too is the implicit commentary by the journalist, Mel Moffat, on the adequacy of the moral accounting accomplished by Tana in his version of the 'split'.

> Extract 2: GLORY SPLIT: Tana says it's time to move on
> (<u>The West Australian</u>, 17th February, 2000)
>
> 1 [...] Tana would not comment on the way the decision was taken.
> 2 'It is not a personal issue', said Tana, who escaped most of the drama of the day
> 3 by spending it at his farm in Manjimup.
> 4 'There is no rift between us. All I can say is that in terms of where the club is now
> 5 — and where it needs to go and what we need to do — I never considered Bernd
> 6 to be a long-term stay.
> 7 'I never asked him about long term. He was given a one-year contract with a one
> 8 year option, which was taken up. I have no other reasons for not offering him
> 9 anything longer.
> 10 'We set ourselves certain objectives in Bernd's contract. He's achieved those.

11 It's now time to move on'.

Again, in lines 2 and 4, we see Tana deflecting (possibly morally negative) 'personal' motives for the decision and, by contrast, appealing to both objective, historical, facts (the details of the original contract, lines 7-8), again stressing his ratiocination (consideration of the length of Stange's stay, line 5; the absence of 'other reasons', line 8; the rational evaluation of the achievement of objectives, line 10) as warrant for Stange's discontinuation as coach. Tana's production of Stange's enforced departure as the result of a rational, dispassionate, impersonal decision-making process is achieved here, then, partly by the repeated stress he places on rational <u>cognition</u> as the prior condition of and for action, and also by emphasising the 'needs' of the club (line 5). Indeed, Tana implies (in line 10) that the decision is one consensually or mutually arrived at: it is 'we' who set the objectives for Bernd's contract.

Note that here the term 'needs' is not — as it was in the previous extract — to be understood as indexing emotionality and (possible) irrationality, but rather as a synonym for (future) <u>requirements</u>.[5] It is a requirement (for the successful future of the club) that it should 'move on'. Of course, and again in a drawing upon the common-knowledge of the culture, the notion of 'moving on' implies the growth, progress and betterment of the club: the core tropes of the economic rationalist/consumerist discourses within which Tana seeks to locate himself and — simultaneously — his actions.[6] But note, too, that this overall claim is bolstered by overtly rational mentality-claims: Tana's basis for his position concerns what he has 'considered' about Stange's long-term prospects. His account of his own moral character, again then, depends on a narrative that brings action-event and rational thought into an apparent convergence.

What these extracts demonstrate, then, is that Tana's orientation to the necessity of attending to the issue of <u>his own rationality</u> is central to the construction of <u>events</u> he seeks to establish. His talk attends to both managing his stake — or interest — in the matter (Potter, 1996) and also to his moral accountability. His talk

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5.   The very local contingency of meaning emphasised in discursive psychology is well illustrated here. Other qualitative approaches, such as content analysis, are entirely unable to manage such indexicality.
6.   But also note that there is another possible reading: that it is <u>Stange</u> who should move on. As we note below, this ambiguity is open to counter-exploitation by letter-writers who disagree with Tana.

then functions to establish a <u>version</u> of himself as motivated by other than emotional, base or 'personal', concerns; and as acting not out of spite — because of a possible 'rift' between himself and the coach — but rather out of his concern for the (emotional) needs of Bernd Stange and the (sporting) needs of the Glory. What are supposedly private 'psychological' states or processes are here understandable <u>not</u> as veridical reports of Tana's or Stange's interior 'cognitive' activity, but rather as public deployments of cultural knowledge of 'psychological' states as <u>rhetorical resources</u> designed to achieve very particular <u>practical-social</u> moral ends; in this case, the self-justification of a sports-management decision.

Analysis 2: stake, interest and appraisal by others

All of what we have seen so far, it might be argued, is just personal idiosyncrasy, a part of the way Nick Tana conducts himself in the world, an aspect of his unique personality. Examination of a range of convergent evidence, however, would suggest that this is not so. That precisely such a moral accounting is a necessary component of everyday sociality, and the terms in which it is normatively managed, are already implicit in Moffat's indirect condemnation of Tana's actions in Extract 2. In lines 2-3 we are told, in a break from reportage of Tana's own account, and in a detail tangential to the main narrative, that Tana, accountably, 'escaped the drama' and spent the day after the 'split' (possibly doing avoidance) at his farm — and also by ordinary members' contributions to the letters page of <u>The West Australian</u>. For example in Extract 3, having established his warrant to comment via incumbency in a membership category (Sacks, 1972) especially <u>entitled</u> to an account — being 'a Perth Glory member' — McDermott (2000) directly addresses Tana and explicitly puts the rationality of his actions at stake via a contestation of his earlier attempted self-justifications:

> Extract 3: Please explain
> (<u>The West Australian</u>, 22nd February, 2000)
>
> 1 Nick Tana, I am a Perth Glory member and I am not sure whether Bernd Stange is
> 2 the right man for the job or not. I obviously haven't got the facts, as you have, but
> 3 I do know that the way you have terminated his contract is wrong.
>   [...]
> 4 Come on Nick, give a rational explanation or be guided by your board and extend
> 5 Stange's contract.

Countering Tana's own claims to a convergence between thought and action — and couching them as a 'direct address' from a first to a second person — McDermott constructs an epistemic discontinuity between Tana's previously-avowed psychological state (his knowledge of the facts, the central plank of his self-justificatory rhetoric) and, now, his <u>failure</u> to offer a 'rational' (i.e., knowledge-based) account. 'Having the facts' (line 2) and giving a 'rational explanation' (line 4) are states which are necessarily and logically related. However, if we think of factuality and rationality as primarily <u>social</u> categories with more of a <u>moral</u> than an <u>evidential</u> or epistemic status, then the status of utterances or actions with regard to these categories cannot be determinable <u>a priori</u>, but must rather be local and contingently worked up. However one may feel about the articulacy of the letter, the epistemic discontinuity it works up — between Tana's purported psychological state and his actions — functions very effectively so as to leave open the inference that his actions have, indeed, been irrational (he has all the facts but he has disregarded them) and, as such, not only are they (doubly) morally wrong but also counter-accountable and (accountably) in need of rectification.

In Extract 4 below, Connew (2000) similarly trades on membership category incumbency as a warrant for demanding that Tana offer a moral account of his reasoning (lines 3-4: 'an explanation of why you are dumping a popular and successful coach'). Connew's accusation of 'ontological gerrymandering' (Potter, 1996) — that Tana is deliberately, and accountably, offering an incomplete version of events — is strengthened here by a number of rhetorical techniques. Connew stresses the number of persons affected by Tana's actions: 'you owe <u>us all</u> an explanation'; the use of the emotive descriptor 'dumping' ('discontinuing', for example, while strictly speaking a more accurate gloss on the contractual details, would have considerably less rhetorical force); citing positive aspects of the un-named Stange's 'personality' (he is 'popular') and his performance (he is 'successful'); and the provision of a three-part list (Jefferson, 1990) of candidate (understandable, reasonable, rational) motives (money, results and conflict) for the decision which Tana himself has <u>not</u> offered.

Extract 4: Why, Mr. Tana?
(<u>The West Australian</u>, 18th February, 2000)

[...]
1   I am a loyal supporter and season-ticket holder who takes an interest in what

2   happens to my team.
3   Mr. Tana, as chairman, you owe us all an explanation of why you are dumping a
4   popular and successful coach. If you can't afford him, say so. If he is not getting
5   results, say so. If there is a conflict, say so. At least show a bit of openness and
6   honesty.
7   Just like any business, the stability and success of a sporting club is built on
8   the quality of its staff. Perth Glory can't afford to alienate its supporters by letting
9   go of its best people. Please explain.[7]

Having constructed Tana's account as duplicitous and dishonest (lines 4-5; line 6), Connew blends (lines 7-9) the tropes Tana himself has deployed as warrant for his actions — see Extracts 1 and 2 — economic rationalism/consumerism (Connew: 'just like any business, the stability and success ... is built on the quality of its staff'; Tana: 'we set ourselves certain objectives in Bernd's contract ... time to move on) and loyalty/commitment to the Glory (Connew: the club 'can't afford to alienate its supporters .... [Glory's] best people'; Tana: 'the club needs a coach committed, in the long-term, to Perth, Western Australia'), to turn Tana's account against him. Again, the highly local flexibility of description, and the rhetorically-organised deployment of culturally commonsensical discourses displayed in these contrasting accounts — notionally of the same set of events — is analytically suggestive. The indexicality of meaning shown here suggests that we must exercise extreme caution in relying upon notions of language which comprehend meaning as lexically or semantically pre-given, as opposed to locally and pragmatically worked up. Furthermore, the prior indeterminacy of meaning demonstrated throughout these extracts suggests that an uncritical reliance on notions of 'discourses' as monolithic and deterministic meaning structures (e.g. Parker, 1992) is unlikely to offer a sufficiently sophisticated theoretical framework within which to analyse the finely-crafted use of language to achieve locally contingent social action.

In the final extract, such sophisticated management of linguistic resources is displayed in the reflexive deployment of 'psychological' (knowledge) attributes — which are here attributed to Tana as his own claims to specialist expertise in and knowledge of football — to ironise both his cognitive capacities and also his managerial actions. Bechta's (2000) ironic quotation of Tana in his letter to the editor not only demonstrates the way in which the media afford discursively distributed

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7.   The Australian colloquialism 'Please explain', while grammatically a request, is in fact constructed as an insult. It strongly implies that the matter at hand is inexplicable.

dialogues (Leudar and Antaki, 1998), but also illustrates the manner in which texts such as these display their continuity with everyday conversation.

Extract 5: Leave our coach
(The West Australian, 20th February, 2000)

1   After failing to renew Bernd Stange's contract, Glory chairman and self-appointed
2   'I know everything there is to know about football person' Nick Tana said: 'It's
3   time to move on' (report, 17/2).
4   Well all I can say to Mr. Tana is, yes, the sooner you move on the better. But leave
5   the coach where he is needed and where he has succeeded.

The ironising of Tana's use of the consumerist discourse of progress and development invoked in the notion of 'moving on' is accomplished by concretising and personalising the pro-term (Sacks, 1995) (the demand that Tana rather than the club should 'move on'). This deployment once more suggests that some approaches to discourse analysis which explicitly claim a Foucaultian inspiration, particularly approaches which attempt an algorithmic, 'cook-book', approach (cf. Parker, 1992; Banister et al, 1994), have been insufficiently attentive to the crucial notion of 'mundane or everyday acts of resistance' (McHoul and Grace, 1993, p.86) in Foucault's analysis of discourse. That is, while Tana's 'time to move on' (Extract 2, line 11) can just about be hearably connected to Stange (and thereby already personalised), it is much more likely a reference to the club's future progress via its link to the pro-term 'we' at the start of the sentence. Bechta, then, is playing on this possible-double reading, but diverting the predicate to a new subject, Tana himself. What this shows up is the further possible attachment of the initial pro-term 'we', in Bechta's counter-reading, to Tana himself, thereby opening up the question of his right to speak on behalf of (or even as) the club itself.

Conclusion: local-moral achievements
The important point that discursive psychology makes here is that 'discourses' may most profitably be understood not as a priori social scientific things, but as resources which are available to members, as repertoires for the production of locally relevant meanings — and particularly, here, for the avowal and ascription of moral character. The task of the analyst then, becomes not the rather tedious and trivial enumeration of a tally of discourses identified, but rather the explication of the way in which social (and sporting) life — what is to count as 'true', what is to be allowable as

'rational', what may be understood as an aspect of the mental states and capacities of oneself and others — is produced, in and for the moment, by and through the use of language, the local crafting of discursive repertoires and the flexible (and sometimes resistive) deployment of rhetorical devices. Indeed, as Segrave observed, in the quotation opening this paper, if we carefully examine talk of and about sport: 'control, power, and supremacy are relevant, and the language of sport ... offers us a fascinating window into the very soul of our existence'.

Sport, then, including the public contestation of its day-to-day management, is no 'time out' from everyday life. (And we are aware that 'time out' itself is a metaphor that everyday life borrows from several sports discourses). Rather, what we are, what, at the start of this paper, Segrave called 'the very soul of our existence', is made up of a discursive capacity for the everyday moral management of ourselves (avowal and self-justification) and others (ascription and counter-evaluation). Accordingly, as we have seen, the self-justification and public appraisal of sports management events are deeply imbricated in — rather than separate from — the myriad matters managed by such routine and generally available moral-discursive techniques.

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