

Article

What Goals? Which Point? Whose Purpose? A Critical Engagement with Sport Internalism

Francisco Javier Lopez Frias 

Kinesiology and Health Science Department, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322, USA;
javi.lopezfrias@usu.edu

Abstract

In this article, I critique the dominance of internalism in sport philosophy and outline an alternative theoretical framework that integrates internal and external elements while striving to transcend the dichotomous language used to conceptualize sport. The analysis begins by claiming that internalism conflates three fundamental teleological aspects of sport: goals, point, and purposes. I argue that this conflation limits internalism's ability to explain the complexity of sporting practices. By carefully distinguishing these elements, I illustrate their distinct roles in shaping sport and explore how they interact. I conclude by proposing that the alternative pluralist framework briefly sketched here enables a more comprehensive understanding of sport.

Keywords: internalism; externalism; theories of sport; point; purpose

1. Introduction

When discussing the question concerning the point of philosophy, theorist of games Thi C. Nguyen explains that, although the standard answer is that philosophers present arguments on complex practical or theoretical issues, philosophical inquiry also has another vital role: it provides people with conceptual tools to interpret their experiences [1]. A new concept can help individuals understand an aspect of reality that previously went unnoticed. For example, Nguyen discusses epistemic justice, which helps one recognize that many aspects of life are more politically charged than they initially appear. Political philosopher Adela Cortina similarly coins the term “aporophobia” to describe people’s “contempt for the poor . . . rejection of the person who takes but cannot give back”, arguing that her philosophical effort to “put a name” to this aspect of social existence is key “to recognize it” as well as “to look for causes and propose ways of overcoming it” [2] (pp. xxi–xxii). Following the footsteps of these luminaries, in this article, I introduce a conceptual lens that can illuminate aspects of sport that have remained unidentified by the predominant conceptual framework in the discipline.

2. The Story That Philosophers of Sport Tell Themselves About Themselves

The history of the philosophy of sport has partly evolved as an “us” versus “them” story. Specifically, in the early days of the discipline (and to some extent still today), sport philosophers have shaped their philosophical frameworks by rejecting externalism in favor of internalism and, subsequently, refining their internalist accounts of sport. Whereas externalism is the view that “the values that sport promotes either express or simply mirror, reflect, or reinforce the values dominant in the wider society”, internalism “holds that sport



Academic Editor: Jason Holt

Received: 6 December 2025

Revised: 21 January 2026

Accepted: 2 February 2026

Published: 4 February 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the author.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and

conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

is itself a significant source of or basis for ethical principles and values” [3] (p. 28). The internalist framework, initially promoted by early ontological analyses of sport, was further strengthened by Robert L. Simon’s [4] formulation of broad internalism, a perspective that, drawing inspiration from legal theorist Ronald M. Dworkin [5], purports to provide an interpretation of sport that shows sporting activities in their best light.

Among the initial contributors to the internalist paradigm, philosophers Klaus V. Meier [6] and Bernard Suits [7] stand out. Their written exchange on the nature of play, games, and sport, published in the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, and their scholarly works preceding this renowned debate heavily shaped how sport philosophers examine sport [8,9]. Despite their numerous disagreements, especially around the nature of sport, both intellectuals concur that the primary objective of the philosophy of sport should be to formulate a definition of sport centered on its *inherent* elements¹. In his search for such a definition, Meier scrutinized sociological definitions of sport, drawing attention to their shortcomings. He noted that, although most sport sociologists view sport as an institutionalized activity (i.e., one that enjoys the support of an administrative structure that governs the rules and promotes participation), institutionalization can hardly be regarded as an essential aspect of sport. In his view, institutional elements “add color and significance and enhance particular aspects, but in a very basic sense they are peripheral concerns, ancillary or accidental to the basic nature of the enterprise, not part of the essential constitutive form of sport and not part of its ontological status” [11] (pp. 7–9).

Likewise, when identifying the goal of his foundational book, *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*, Suits posits: “The orientation of the book is philosophical in one traditional sense of that word. It is the attempt to discover and formulate a definition, and to follow the implications of that discovery even when they lead in surprising, and sometimes disconcerting, directions” [12] (p. ix). Similarly to Meier, Suits distinguishes his philosophical approach to sport from the perspectives of his peers in the sociology of sport, noting that his musings on games might be relevant to “those who are interested, or who profess to be interested, in the social determinants of sport and in sports as indicators of social values...But these speculations, while intriguing...are somewhat tangential to our main concern, which is to test our definition” [12] (p. 138). This illustrious definition concentrates on those elements that are “strictly speaking, a part of the game”, as Suits clarifies when talking about how the reasons why people engage in games are hardly a defining element of this kind of activity, but instead constitutive of the lives of the individuals partaking in games [12] (p. 37).

In their path-breaking volume, *Fair Play: The Ethics of Sport*, Robert L. Simon, Cesar R. Torres, and Peter F. Hager specify that a theory of sport must perform the following functions: (1) “offer a characterization of sport that helps us to distinguish sports from other activities”; (2) “explain the features of sport that make it of significant interest to people around the globe”; and (3) “explain the value (or disvalue, if they are critical of sport and sporting practices) of sport and provide the resources for the moral evaluation of sport...and the ethical issues that arise in particular sporting contexts” [3] (p. 24). Their famous iteration of internalism as broad internalism distinctly demonstrates a preference for internal notions over external tropes: “Broad internalism...is the view that *in addition to* the constitutive rules of sport, there are other resources *connected closely*—perhaps conceptually—to sport that are *neither* social conventions nor moral principles that *merely mirror* the dominant morality in society” [2] (p. 34, emphasis added).

Simon’s proposal, also known as a kind of “interpretivism”, has proven strikingly influential, with numerous prominent scholars aligning their work to varying degrees with broad internalist principles [13,14]. In fact, broad internalism “has won the day,” becoming the dominant framework among sport philosophers (and with barely nobody identifying

as an externalist sport philosopher since the 1980s). Yet externalist tropes continue to influence philosophical debates about sport, particularly those with normative components and implications. Consider the discussion on the inclusion of transgender athletes in sport or the categorization of athletes in disability sport. In these cases, scholars, including sport philosophers, often argue that so-called “external” or non-sporting, broader social principles, such as social justice or inclusion, should take precedence over sport-specific criteria, including competitive fairness and excellence [15,16].

In this article, I critique the dominance of broad internalism in the philosophy of sport and propose a path to sketching an alternative theoretical framework that integrates both internal and external elements. To formulate this alternative, I begin by arguing that internalism conflates three fundamental teleological building blocks of sport: goals, point, and purposes. I then clearly distinguish these elements and examine their interactions. Finally, I explain that my alternative theoretical framework embraces a pluralist perspective for both descriptive and normative examinations of sport. This contribution expands on R. Scott Kretchmar’s and J.S. Russell’s pluralist efforts, detailed below, to critique broad internalism by emphasizing its narrowness. However, the approach outlined here diverges significantly from theirs in that they seem to remain within the theoretical confines of the internalism-externalism dichotomous framework created by internalist sport philosophers. I seek to transcend this dichotomous thinking, arguing that discussions of “internal” and “external” elements of sport misrepresent the complexity and intricacies of sport, particularly the multiplicity of goals that agents pursue through engagement in sports and how such purposes shape sporting practices themselves².

3. The Origins of the Goal-Point-Purpose Triad in the History of the Philosophy of Sport

In seeking to grasp the inherent elements of sport, internalist sport philosophers have distinguished sporting activities from kindred practices by arguing that the *point and purpose* of sport are distinct from those of non-sporting activities. For example, Suits famously conceptualizes games in opposition to technical activities (i.e., an activity where an agent uses the most efficient means to achieve a goal) based on their differing means-goal structures. In technical activities, the *goal* is paramount; agents must use the most efficient means to achieve it. A carpenter would naturally opt for a drill instead of a screwdriver when assembling furniture. In games, the means take precedence over the goal; players adopt a goal *just so* they can utilize a specific set of means. Participants in a footrace are interested in testing their running capacity (means), not traveling from point A to point B (goal). If achieving the goal was the primary concern, they would likely choose motorized transportation rather than running.

Pace Suits, conventionalist sport philosopher William J. Morgan identifies the unique characteristic that differentiates sport from other human activities: “the gratuitous logic”. This essential trait, according to Morgan, is the intentional creation of “challenging situations by introducing unnecessary obstacles to the achievement of an end” [17] (p. 44), which he regards as the “rational center” or “the whole point and purpose” of sport [17] (p. 147). In more detailed elaborations of his conventionalist proposal, Morgan identifies his main focus as “hard normative cases in which conflicting conceptions of the point and purpose of sport raise normative quandaries” [18] (p. 27). As an example, he explains that, in the nineteenth century, English amateurs and US professionals had very different views on the “point and purpose of athletic striving” [18] (pp. 29–30). According to him, by “assigning particular, unmistakably *social purposes* to athletic practice”, individuals in these communities add “a normative perspective” to sport, as such purposes provide “participants with a normative guide by which to orient themselves” [18] (p. 32, emphasis added).

Notably, while Morgan's sport conventionalism initially seeks to clarify both the point and the purpose of sporting activities, he later centers only on the latter, leaving the former aside, suggesting that he treats the two terms as interchangeable. Furthermore, he shifts from referring to social purposes in the plural to invoking a singular purpose. In a subsequent work, he replaces the notion of point with that of basic nature: "the principles that ground their normative judgments regarding what is the basic nature and purpose of sport" [19] (p. 67), and, when discussing such principles, he refers to them as "the main *purpose(s)* of athletic contest" [19] (p. 71, emphasis added). Yet, he conflates point and purpose again, stating that "if there is a distinctive purpose that sport can be said to serve that transcends all particular cultural points of view, it is surely that of striving for bodily excellence" [19] (p. 68). Thus, the effort to perfect bodily skills serves as the distinctive purpose of sport and defines its point or basic nature.

In a similar vein, in his groundbreaking essay, "Are Rules All an Umpire Has to Work With?", Russell uses the ideas of "point" and "purpose" to analyze the nature of sport. He suggests that sport philosophers must discover interpretive principles "to generate a coherent and principled account of the *point and purposes* that underlie the game, attempting to show the game in its best light" [20] (p. 35). He further explains that "the *point*, and indeed *the very idea*, of a game requires setting obstacles or inefficiencies to achieving a goal that must be overcome through the development of certain skills or excellences that are permitted by the rules and the obstacles they set out" [20] (p. 35). Russell, paralleling Morgan's examination, collapses the distinction between the point and purpose of sport, identifying both as involving the creation and overcoming of obstacles through specific skills.

Simon, Torres, and Hager, much like Morgan and Russell, rely on the concepts of "point" and "purpose" when looking for the intrinsic nature of sport: "[a] particular interpretation [of sport] is justified by how well it fits or explains the key feature of the sport at issue and, more broadly, the purpose of the practice of sport itself" [3] (p. 34). They locate this purpose in their influential definition of competitive sport as "a mutual quest for *excellence*, an activity that is significantly cooperative in that all the participants consent to be tested in the crucible of competition for both the *intrinsic value* of meeting interesting challenges and for what we can learn about ourselves and others through the attempt to meet the competitive test" [3] (p. 47). Thus, in Simon et al.'s interpretation of (competitive) sport, the mutual quest for excellence, the intrinsic value of meeting worthwhile challenges, and the importance of discovering one's limitations are the key features of the purpose of sport³. In addition, they use the concept of "point" when referring to the specific lusory goal of softball: "A group of people may play softball just to interact with friends, but the point of the game, as defined by the rules, is to score more runs than the opponent" [3] (p. 38). Notably, their goal in identifying the point of softball is to separate this end from external ends people might bring to sport (e.g., socialization).

In summary, the philosophers above, whose works have catalyzed and cemented the internalist paradigm [24,25], acknowledge that "goal", "purpose", and "point" are crucial in understanding sport, but they often do not clearly define these terms or analyze how they relate, nor do they agree on what they mean. The only point they agree on is that sports involve two types of motivational elements. One focuses on ends inherent to sport (e.g., achieving a specific condition within the established rules), while the other relates to participants' motivations.

4. What Goals? Which Point? Whose Purpose? The Goal-Point-Purpose Triad

No matter how sport is defined, three fundamental teleological elements are always present: goals, point, and purposes⁴. Essentially, a sport is an activity that involves pursuing a state of affairs (goal) or a series of them (goals) within a regulated framework, where rules limit actions *just so* players use specific skills to overcome challenges (point) for one or more compelling subjective or collective reasons (purposes)⁵.

4.1. Goals

Games revolve around the pursuit of one specific state of affairs or goal. In a race, the goal is to travel from point A to point B; in tennis, it is to put the ball over an imaginary line (or within a certain height limit), delineated by a net, into a particular area of the ground. Sport philosophers, drawing on Suits, refer to this foundational goal as the pre-lusory goal [12] (p. 37). However, this is just one of the goals of games. Suits also identifies the goal of winning, which he labels “lusory goal” [12] (p. 38) and describes as achieving the pre-lusory goal of the game as prescribed by the rules [28] (p. 156). Sport philosopher Sigmund Loland, when examining competitive sport, refers to these goals as “sport-specific” [29].

Despite being well established in the philosophy of sport, the distinction between pre-lusory and lusory goals is unclear. A player might achieve the pre-lusory goal of the game while following the rules but still fail to win. Suppose a marathoner runs the correct distance and route but crosses the finish line after an opponent. In this case, the marathoner succeeds in completing the game but fails to win, illustrating that completing *and* winning a game are two different, though often overlapping, lusory goals [30]. Furthermore, in sports where achieving the lusory goal does not conclude the game, as in Kretchmar’s “T games” (i.e., time-regulated games), a competitor might accomplish the lusory goal but fail to do so as many times as their opponent within the stipulated time [31]. Soccer serves as an example. A team might score by putting the ball into the net using their feet (thereby achieving the pre-lusory goal within the rules), but this might be insufficient to win if the opponent scores more goals over a 90-min regulation period. Similarly, a golfer might skillfully put the ball into the hole yet still fail to win the golf meet due to taking too many strokes over the 18-hole course.

Even if the lusory goal is defined more comprehensibly as “Use your feet to hit the ball into the net more times than the opposing team over the regulatory time” or “Put the ball into the 18 holes in a golf course sequentially by using a golf club needing a lower number of strokes than your opponents”, the concept remains elusive. In “hybrid” sports, such as boxing and ski jumping, victory is achievable in multiple ways: by knockout or point accumulation [32]. These varied victory conditions challenge Suits’ conception of goal (both pre-lusory and lusory), questioning whether both cases should be considered goals or if one (e.g., knockout) is the primary goal, with the other serving as an alternative method to decide the winner, perhaps to minimize harm. Moreover, in his examination of winning, Suits introduces further complexity by identifying “trying to win” as another goal of games, mainly to separate genuine players from quasi-players (i.e., triflers) who appear to be playing a game by following the rules but are not truly doing so because they do not try to win [12] (p. 37).

While players are generally expected to strive to win, this perspective overlooks the intricacies of gameplay situations. In competitive settings, participants must certainly adopt a stance toward winning, but wholeheartedly trying to win is not the only possible attitude, as Suits acknowledges [30]. When placed within a larger competition, players might strategically aim to tie or lose [33,34]. Likewise, a participant might prioritize

completing the game over striving to win. As such, trying to complete the game stands out as another potential lusory goal. Take the case of an unranked tennis player competing in their first professional tournament against a top-ranked player who might concentrate more on avoiding a significant loss or simply doing their best. In this regard, Loland identifies the structural goal of *competitive* sport as the objective to “measure, compare and rank two or more competitors according to athletic performance” [29]. In different contexts, players in a pick-up basketball game might be more interested in exercising and having fun, with little regard for victory. In fact, some games and sports, such as the modified version of table tennis that Suits examines in Chapter 12 of his *magnum opus* (where the goal is to keep the ball in play rather than score), are cooperative rather than competitive, or, even if competitive in nature, players modify them to remove or downplay their competitive/comparative aspects [12]—think of a water polo game in which participants do not keep the score.

Perhaps many of the cases above would hardly qualify as good games for Suits (and many of his followers). Nonetheless, a philosophical theory of sport that only focuses on good games is skewed. The theory must capture the defining elements of games, identifying the multiple possible configurations of these elements—some of which may be considered good, while others are not. In summary, games have multiple goals. Depending on their compelling subjective or collective reasons (that is, purposes such as exercising, learning, or having fun), players focus on one or some of them, varying their stance toward the goals. However, to enter a gameplay activity and qualify as legitimate players, they must all meet a minimal requirement—as Suits espouses with his notion of the lusory attitude—by accepting certain rules so that the activity enabled by their agreement can occur [12]. This requirement fundamentally defines the *point* of sport.

4.2. Point

In his early works, closely following Suits’ ruminations on gameplay, Morgan contends that all sporting practices share one element in common: “they are all contrived pursuits that seek to overcome unnecessary obstacles” [17] (p. 210). For him, this element makes the structural core of sports, as it serves as the underlying logic of their constitutive rules and goals [17] (p. 210). Kretchmar also appeals to the so-called “gratuitous nature” of games to describe them as “attempt[s] to solve a gratuitous [unnecessary] problem” [35] (p. 289). These characterizations of sport echo Suits’ “portable” definition of gameplay as “the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles” [12] (p. 41). Specifically, they refer to the unnecessary nature of the challenges sport poses. In Suits’ words, sports “are *new* things to do, and they are new things because they require the overcoming of (by ordinary standards) *unnecessary* obstacles, and in ordinary life an unnecessary obstacle is simply a contradiction in terms” [36] (p. 15, original emphasis).

Suits’ comparison between games and technical activities highlights the key element to finding the point of sport: the peculiar relationship between rules and goals, which fundamentally distinguishes sporting activities from other everyday activities. In ordinary life, goals generally take precedence over the means used to achieve them, mainly because the goals have a significant impact on the world. The piece of furniture assembled by a carpenter will have a lasting impact on its users’ everyday lives. In sport, the means employed are more important than the goals, largely (but not always)⁶ because the goals are inherently trivial. Putting a ball into a net, covering a specific circuit, and immobilizing a king are meaningless if achieved outside the context of the game or using capacities forbidden by the rules. What makes games valuable is the process of trying to achieve a goal, which facilitates the development of specific capacities and the enjoyment of unique values⁷. A soccer player must use any part of their body but their arms to score, a runner

must use a specific form of movement to cover a set circuit, and a chess player must utilize specific cognitive skills to immobilize their opponent's king.

In this respect, Eleanor Metheny's and Fraleigh's earlier definitions of sport appear to capture the point of sport quite accurately. The former describes sport as "a self-chosen and rule-governed task which involves the attempt to overcome the inertia of certain substantial forms in specified ways" [37] (pp. 61–62). The latter identifies the core of sport as "the relative abilities of all participants to move mass in space and time by utilizing bodily moves which exhibit developed motor skills, physiological and psychological endurance and socially approved tactics and strategy" [38] (p. 96). As Torres eloquently pens, sport "promotes the creation of particular and specialized skills that are utilized to better negotiate resolutions to the artificial tests inherent in games" [39] (p. 85)⁸. The point of games, therefore, lies in presenting problems that evoke specialized capacities, many of which are rarely used outside game contexts (e.g., precise object-kicking). Put differently, players subject themselves to a set of agreed-upon rules that proscribe the use of particular capacities in attempting to overcome specific challenges⁹.

The point of a sport is responsible for the fundamental structure of the activity; thus, participants must respect it. In this regard, like Kretchmar above, Morgan indicates that "at least one reason for taking up sport must be to meet the gratuitous difficulties it poses" [17] (pp. 227–228). In alignment with this claim about the centrality of the point of sport, when more broadly discussing the integrity of social practices, legal philosopher Andrei Marmor, whose ideas heavily influenced Morgan's, states that "practices must exhibit some minimal level of shared understanding among participants about the practice's putative values" [41] (p. 80). The point of sport offers this basic level of understanding, following Marmor, and permits "considerable disagreement among people who engage in it" [41] (p. 79).

On the matter of when disagreement becomes a major threat to the point of a sporting practice, Morgan opines that "while one may with impunity use sport to achieve other ends or to secure goods external to it, one may not with impunity use sport merely as a means, as an instrumental tool, to achieve such ends or secure such goods" [17] (p. 228). Consequently, in his view, the primary menace to sport is what Suits refers to as "radical instrumentalism" toward games, that is, "the view that games are essentially instruments" [12] (p. 147). This is because they ignore the point of sport. Consider a scripted competition where victory is assured for the nation that brings in the most revenue, or a fixed chess match manipulated to ensure a win for a betting agent. These scenarios hardly qualify as instances of gameplay. The point of games, using very specific abilities to overcome obstacles, disappears when scripting and fixing eliminate those obstacles to secure instrumental goals. The proliferation of radical instrumentalism is a major concern for the integrity of sport, but it is not the only one. Disagreements on the purposes participants pursue also imperil sporting practices, as Morgan's examination of conflicts between professional and amateur sport ideologies suggests [19,43].

4.3. Purposes

Sport philosopher Leslie Howe clearly separates teleological elements connected to achieving the goal of a sport and those arising from the players' interests, that is, their purposes [44]. Howe emphasizes that while gaining and honing the skills and strategies required for reaching the goal of a sport are essential to playing a sport, these are not always the reasons why one plays; "one may just like exercising those particular movements and skills" [44] (p. 439). This distinction strongly resembles Loland's differentiation between the abovementioned sport-specific (as well as structural) and intentional goals (i.e., "individuals' subjective reasons for engaging in sport") of competitive sports [29]. Likewise,

when elucidating the values and purposes of sport, Fraleigh differentiates between the specific ends of a sport contest (i.e., goals) and its purpose, explaining that the ends pertain to what happens within the contest, while the purpose is the reason it exists [38] (p. 40).

Fraleigh further elaborates that the purpose “comes from someone” [38] (p. 41). In particular, he reasons that humans have created and modeled sport contests throughout centuries to achieve values inherent and unique to the activity, particularly to allow “mutual appraisal of the relative abilities of all participants” in moving mass in space and time, through bodily movements that exhibit developed motor skills, endurance (physiological and psychological), and socially endorsed tactics and strategies [38] (p. 41). From a different yet related perspective, Nguyen argues that games, including sports, are social artifacts designed to record, preserve, and transmit embodied forms of agency [45]. He characterizes them as “a social technology” that serves the purpose of “inscribing forms of agency into artifactual vessels: for recording them, preserving them, and passing them around” [45] (pp. 1–2). Put shortly, sports offer opportunities to “experience forms of agency we might not have discovered on our own” [45] (pp. 1–2).

Accordingly, the goals to be achieved in a sport and the capacities to be employed heavily depend on the purposes participants seek to advance, or that game designers seek to elicit and promote (e.g., measuring abilities, exploring agential modes, experiencing pleasure). In this sense, Morgan’s examination of the historical and conventional character of sport suggests that certain sporting activities, depending on the skills they require and the goals they pursue, resonate more with specific social groups and eras. For instance, he explains that jousting was popular in feudal societies because it evoked a specific military mindset, and tackle football has succeeded in modern capitalist societies due to its aggressive nature. Through these examples, he argues that partaking in a sport involves more than mere awareness of its goals; it also requires finding the practice “worthy of one’s commitment and devotion” [17] (p. 224), meaning that their purposes align with the purpose that animates the sport. Hence, for him, any comprehensive understanding of sport must address its goals and embeddedness in particular ways of life.

In a related line of thought, Marmor asserts that “it is never just rules that stand in a grounding relation to a social practice, but also some shared understandings of what the rules are for and what the point of the activity is. A constitutive relation between rules and practices is not complete without this further element of shared attitudes” [41] (pp. 78–79). Imagine two soccer games: one aims to instill a specific playstyle in players, prompting them to develop the skills required to display such a playstyle, and the other is the final match of a prestigious professional tournament. The footballers in these different scenarios pursue the same (prelusive and lusory) goals, but their practices are significantly different because of the varying purposes they seek to advance. Bioethicist and sport philosopher Leslie Francis makes a similar claim regarding the rules governing the structure and categorization of disability sport. In their more competitive version, Paralympic sport, rules seek to shape sporting environments to maximize fairness and entertainment. In the Special Olympics, however, the emphasis is on self-development. As such, the purposes that drive participants (e.g., excellence, self-development, notoriety) significantly affect the configuration of different sporting activities and communities. They “why” impacts the “what,” and in turn, the “how” sporting agents should go about their engagement in sport.

Kretchmar extensively investigates the diverse purposes that motivate individuals to play sport, formulating a theory known as pluralistic internalism¹⁰. This theory identifies “additional purposes that are compatible with game testing and contesting actions and that...are tethered to common human needs and interests” [48] (p. 86). He describes these purposes as “nested intentionalities that are compatible with and linked to foundational testing and contesting purposes” [48] (p. 86). Then, Kretchmar is referring here to purposes

that help participants advance specific needs and interests. He ultimately outlines six versions of sport, each associated with distinct purposes: (1) drama, (2) narrative unity, (3) knowledge, (4) opportunity or serendipity, (5) individual identity, and (6) solidarity or community¹¹.

As per Kretchmar, the different understandings of sport are hardly monolithic; multiple purposes coexist, sometimes in tension, within concrete sporting practices. Elite-level sports are typically geared toward fulfilling the first and third purposes, while sport-for-all activities are more strongly tied to the last two purposes. Fraleigh relatedly notes that, although his view of the sport centers on an epistemological purpose, participants often engage in sports for multiple reasons, which he terms “motives”, beyond this central purpose. Among these motives, some are more in harmony with the primary epistemological purpose of sport than others. As such, multiple purposes can cohabitate if they are congruent. In the same vein, Kretchmar opines that “[c]ultural variation and personal taste can be accommodated, I say, to a degree” [48] (n. 7). For him, the point of sport, as thematized above, serves as a minimum criterion, though not the sole one, to assess the degree to which purposes can be accommodated into sport.

Morgan’s and Kretchmar’s (as well as Fraleigh’s) accounts of the purposes of sport are crucial to understand why the same sport might take radically different configurations depending on the participants’ compelling subjective or collective reasons. However, something seems to be missing or underexplored in their accounts: the ground of those purposes, that is, the reason that makes them compelling at the individual and collective levels. Kretchmar appeals to humans’ shared nature, identifying “common human needs and interests” that give rise to social activities like sport [48] (p. 86). However, Kretchmar does not identify the justification for selecting and favoring these traits as normatively salient. In his view, they seem to be found through intuition, from “[his] personal observations of contemporary sport, [his] incomplete understanding of sport history, and [his] partly idiosyncratic personal experiences as an athlete” [48] (p. 85). His intuition takes him (and the philosophy of sport) further than any previous conceptualization of sport. However, normatively, intuition is hardly binding and guiding. Finding common interests that drive humans to certain practices fails to explain why humans should engage in those practices in specific ways. A connection of such intuitions with theories of value applied sport (i.e., those illuminating what makes sport valuable or good) seems necessary to further the analytical power of pluralistic accounts of sport—see, for instance, explanations of the value of achievement in sport [33,49]¹².

In a similar anthropological vein, Morgan, by drawing from Marmor, points out that “basic psychological and social needs” determine the content of specific sporting practices [43] (p. 160). Yet, throughout most of his works, Morgan usually refers to sports as “perfectionist practices”, that is, one where the guiding purpose of sport participants is, paraphrasing Russell’s internal normative principle, to protect and promote certain athletic excellences to win [17–19,43,50]. Inspired by John Rawls’ distinction between the concept of justice and its conceptions, Morgan elucidates that different communitarian, contextual *conceptions* of the perfective aim of sport give content to the *concept* of sport as a perfectionist enterprise [19] (p. 80).

In a critical assessment of Morgan’s views of games and his engagement with Marmor, Maksymilian Del Mar challenges the idea that the rules of games so clearly establish a perfective aim, arguing: “Playing certain kinds of games becomes possible by creating a set of rules, but even then, the aim(s) and value(s) of those kinds of play are not going to be determined by those rules. Rules, ultimately, are better conceived of as resources—as instruments, which may be more or less useful, and to which we may be more or less committed” [51] (p. 271). Hence, in this view, games serve specific social purposes upon

which their configuration crucially depends. Del Mar, however, fails to conduct an in-depth examination of those purposes. Moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's virtue ethical approach to social practices and philosopher of science Joseph Rouse's theory of social practices as biological niche construction offer extraordinary insight into this issue [52]¹³.

5. The Continuity Between the Purposes and the Point as Well as the Goals of Sport

MacIntyre's account of social practice is well known to sport philosophers. In fact, chronicler of the history of the discipline have recognized it as one of the most influential works among those aiming to evaluate sport normatively [25,55]. Defining a practice as "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity", MacIntyre identifies the pursuit of goods internal to social practices, while seeking to achieve standards of excellence and realize individuals' conception of the good, as partially definitive of the practices. Thus, the achievement of internal goods is a key purpose for individuals who partake in a social practice. Crucially, MacIntyre refers to sports, such as chess and baseball, on multiple occasions to illustrate his concepts, implying that sports are social practices. For instance, in the game of chess, "there are the goods internal to the practice of chess which cannot be had in any way but by playing chess or some other game of that specific kind" (p. 188). Consider the experience of making a winning move by outsmarting one's opponent. These goods can only be achieved by engaging in a specific social practice. In contrast, external goods are contingently connected to a social practice and, in fact, can be accomplished through engagement in diverse practices. Take social recognition, something a person can earn by being an excellent pitcher or a prolific charlatan.

In emphasizing that internal goods are partially constitutive of social practices, MacIntyre makes room for other defining and normative elements, such as the mentioned standards of excellence, the rules of those practices, and most importantly, the human virtues. A virtue, for MacIntyre, is "an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods" (p. 191). Virtues play a central role in social practices because they govern how individuals engage with one another. For example, honesty enables cooperation by encouraging transparent interaction and discouraging hidden, misleading behaviors that could threaten the stability of a practice. Consider a cheater who deceives opponents to gain a competitive edge, threatening the stability of the game; if everyone (or most participants) cheats, the game cannot continue.

The virtues, thus, frame the normative context in which internal goods and excellences within practices are understood. In the soccer world, a highly technical dribbler in soccer, like Vinicius Jr., is typically regarded as good for mastering the art of taking on defenders. Yet from a virtue-based standpoint, "being good" cannot simply mean possessing refined technical skills. If a player organizes their sporting life around virtues, such as efficiency or cooperation, exceptional dribbling may actually hinder the expression of these virtues, since dribbling often encourages a more ego-driven playstyle that can undermine the collective aims of a sport so deeply grounded in teamwork. By contrast, if courage is the guiding virtue, elite dribbling aligns with this virtuous trait: dribblers regularly face and embrace the risks inherent in high-pressure one-on-one situations. The virtues that players embody shape how athletes pursue the goal(s) and approach the point of the sport. For the cooperative player, neither teleological element is threatened, as cooperation lies at the core of soccer. The opposite may hold for the ego-driven dribbler. If their focus is on showcasing individual skill, they may repeatedly perform actions that do little to seek to achieve the goal of the sport, recall Suits' triflers [12] (ch. 4). For instance, they might dribble purely

for spectacle, without any intention of creating chances or scoring. Taken to an extreme, the point of the sport becomes distorted: the player shows little interest in overcoming the central obstacles of sport and instead seeks the notoriety of performing tricks, effectively engaging in a different activity altogether: freestyle soccer.

In the MacIntyrean framework, the notion of virtue is “complex, historical, [and] multilayered” [56] (p. 186). As such, “there is more to the core concept of a virtue than can be spelled out in terms of practices [because] the scope of any virtue in human life extends beyond the practices in terms of which it is initially defined” [56] (p. 200). Specifically, MacIntyre holds that the virtues individuals exercise as members of specific social practices play a key role in crafting a particular life story that shapes the practices they take up and the goods they pursue through them. Those virtues, in turn, arise from the social traditions into which people are raised. According to MacIntyre, “the individual’s search for his or her good is generally and characteristically conducted within a context defined by those traditions of which the individual’s life is a part, and this is true both of those goods which are internal to practices and of the goods of a single life” (p. 222). Therefore, the purposes one must pursue based on their life story, heavily influenced by their social environment, ultimately shape the social practices they engage in and how they do so, especially regarding the internal goods they seek. Seen through this lens, normative evaluation in sport must account for the, paraphrasing MacIntyre, complex, historical, and multi-layered character of sport. Particularly, sporting activities emerge from interactions between two interconnected dimensions: one constituted by the internal goods, excellences, rules, and virtues that govern a practice, and the other comprised by the traditions and stories that shape individuals’ identities. To more specifically use the triad of concepts examined in this article, MacIntyre’s virtue ethics theory illuminates how the goals and point of a sport are intertwined with the purposes that sporting participants seek to advance.

Rouse offers a comparable, fruitful framework to capture these relationships, identifying two normative dimensions that structure agents’ reasons for engaging in social practices, including sport: “Human ways of life are horizontally differentiated by the many practices whose mutual support enables their participants to live very different lives . . . Those lives are also vertically differentiated by participation in multiple practices that require them to coordinate those involvements within a single life” [52] (p. 85). Although these sentences refer to individuals who operate within specific social practices, Rouse, like MacIntyre, extends his view to practices themselves, arguing that they exist on horizontal and vertical axes that significantly shape their character—they cannot enjoy complete independence, as if they operated in a vacuum¹⁴.

Defining social practices as “articulated and differentiated components of human ways of life which together make up ways of making a living within and from biological environments” [52] (p. 112), Rouse explains that practices consist of a series of constitutive elements that ensure their continuity over time, providing individuals with opportunities to sustain themselves and, most importantly, to advance life plans that are unrealizable in the absence of the practices (e.g., one cannot make a living off teaching philosophy without the practice of education). To sustain their long-term continuity, practices develop regularities, norms, and assumptions that all participants must accept. However, these elements often vary depending on the prevailing purposes of the individuals who create the practices. Using the example of college education, Rouse writes:

Designation as “college education” does not mark a determinate common feature or concern shared by its instances, but is instead the site of conflicts among participants concerning what they are doing, to what ends. The goals of higher education have been construed in diverse ways: technical expertise, critical reflection, or developing moral character; vocational preparation, flexible skills, or meaningful life-orientation; preservation

of class privilege or opportunities for social mobility; continuation of tradition or support for innovation; individual advancement, maintaining an educated class as a social, economic, or political resource, or achieving a preferred distribution of its outcomes among different groups. These issues play out differently across historical or cultural contexts despite links and influences among them. [52] (p. 115)¹⁵. When someone joins a social practice, they must adhere to the predominant structure, accepting its regularities, norms, and assumptions. Over time, however, members can change these to better serve the purposes they seek to advance by engaging in the practices.

From a vertical perspective, purposes beyond the core of a practice also influence it. Practices must “fit into a changing nexus of practices as part of the global diversification of human ways of life” [52] (p. 140). That is to say, practices within the same social context are interconnected and influence one another. Therefore, principles that promote the coexistence of multiple practices, such as social justice, personal security, and interpersonal communication [52] (p. 141), set crucial boundaries. According to Rouse, these purposes, unlike those in MacIntyre’s proposal in *After Virtue*, are anchored in biology. They relate to humans’ reliance on social practices to create niches for fulfilling their needs, including those linked to the development of meaningful lives: “The evolution of a niche-reconstructive, practice-differentiated way of life mostly enhanced and refined people’s collective ability to satisfy basic biological needs, while also enabling new kinds of cooperative activity and achievement through that mutual interdependence” [52] (p. 232).

Rouse’s framework helps clarify how a sport’s goals, its point, and purposes are interconnected along both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Consider intercollegiate basketball. Horizontally, the sport provides individuals with an activity in which they voluntarily attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles to put a ball into a basket (goal), just so they can participate in the process of trying to achieve that goal in a specified manner (the point). Participants who enter the practice must initially accept the goals and point of basketball to count as legitimate players. Vertically, intercollegiate basketball must also be coordinated with other social practices—such as higher education, healthcare, and labor—that can impose normative limits on how and why individuals operate in sport (for instance, why they see the point of the sport as meaningful) as well as co-constitute the nature of the sport. Because intercollegiate basketball players participate in other practices as well, they join the sport (and the rest of their activities) with diverse, often contested purposes, ranging from competitive achievement and personal development to educational opportunity, institutional prestige, and economic security. As Rouse emphasizes, these purposes shape how participants interpret and organize the practice over time, influencing competitive expectations, eligibility standards, and the balance between sport and other life demands—while Division I and Division III basketball players engage in the same sport, these aspects vary significantly across divisions (and even conferences within them). In this way, the goals internal to the sport and its point, as an artificial challenge of a specific type, are continuously shaped both by the purposes participants seek to advance, which are continuous with the broader milieu of practices within which the sport is embedded—and in relationship.

For MacIntyre, the virtues develop within practices whose internal goods allow individuals to weave coherent life narratives shaped by inherited moral traditions. Rouse complements this by portraying practices as evolved niches that secure human survival and support diverse conceptions of the good. Taken together, their views provide the normative grounding absent in Kretchmar’s pluralistic internalism: a firm normative foundation anchored in vital purposes that shape the nature of social practices, purposes concerned with valuable aims such as sustaining human life, cultivating a good moral character, transmitting traditions, and pursuing varying conceptions of the good life.

What follows from the analysis of the goal-point-purpose triad is that, though analytically distinct, the teleological elements of sport are ultimately inseparable in reality. The goals and point of sport stem from people's interest in crafting and participating in activities that evoke specific actions and, ultimately, allow them to achieve specific vital goals. The exploration of the interplay between goals, point, and purposes leads to an approach to sport that recognizes both the socio-historical factors shaping specific instantiations of a sport and the existence of an inherent core—its point—that serves as a fundamental element found across all sports¹⁶. Any theory of sport must accommodate this complexity, recognizing that sports emerge and evolve through the influence of myriad intersecting purposes. Nonetheless, as I will show, broad internalist accounts often treat one type of purpose, those related to the perfection of human talent. The one-dimensional view of sport central to internalism diminishes the richness of sport because it fails to fully account for the relationships between sport and its larger socio-historical context.

6. The Purposes Driving Internalism

Advocates of internalism have developed understandings of sport that include the three teleological aspects discussed above. Their analyses, arguably containing the seeds of the proposed alternative framework, nevertheless saw these luminaries downplay the connections among goals, point, and purposes—focusing instead on the elements uniquely inherent to sport, namely the goals and point¹⁷. Although somewhat obscured, the goal-point-purpose triad is present in Suits' masterpiece, *The Grasshopper*. The book has two thematic sections [59]. One searches for a definition of games. The other explores normative questions, identifying what qualifies as a good instance of this activity and highlighting its role in people's search for a good life. While Suits commentators frequently separate the definitional and normative inquiries, treating them as distinct, they are deeply interconnected; see ref. [60]. In fact, some interpreters have suggested that normative concerns have so heavily influenced Suits' definitional work that his concept of gameplay is overly narrow, reflecting a particular approach to the good life [61,62]. Nguyen falls into this group. He states, "I do not think Suits has provided a complete account of all forms of game playing" [45] (p. 6). For Nguyen, Suitsian games prioritize two characteristics: striving and achieving, which appeal to players motivated by the struggle (strivers) or the achievement of goals (achievers). However, other types of games are possible.

Suits' analysis is solely concerned with "striving-and-achieving" games because they align with his view of the good life, which emphasizes using one's abilities to achieve difficult goals. In his framework, games serve broader purposes aimed at structuring life around worthwhile challenges, which can be understood individually and socially. Individually, Suits' view of the good life is akin to John Rawls' Aristotelian principle. He points out: "People play games so that they can realize in themselves capacities not realizable (or not readily so) in the pursuit of their ordinary activities" [36] (p. 14). Suits arguably regards gameplay as a fundamental activity for producing societies that combat the adverse effects of automation and foster a more fulfilling way of life [63]. He famously remarks: "Game playing makes it possible to retain enough effort in Utopia [a fictional post-labor society he uses to explore the normative aspect of gameplay] to make life worth living" [12] (p. 172)¹⁸. In this way, Suits' gameplay concept encapsulates the purposes of exerting effort to develop capacities and engaging in meaningful activities¹⁹.

Broad internalists' focus on the quest for excellence equally prioritizes purposes linked to experiences of striving and achieving, most commonly found in competitive sport. As early as the late 1970s, when the internalist approach to sport was forming, philosopher Paul Weiss characterized sport as "a traditionalized set of rules to be exemplified by men who try to be excellent in and through their bodies" [64] (p. 143) From this narrow perspective,

sport “has no purpose to serve other than that of exemplifying a sport and providing men with the opportunity to show what bodily excellence is and does” [64] (p. 154). Echoing Weiss’ views, Simon approvingly cites former basketball star and fellow sport philosopher Drew Hyland’s claim that “sports at their best can be part of a Socratic process of self-examination, in which we learn about our strengths and weaknesses...through the common challenge of achieving competitive excellence” [65] (p. 11). In reinforcing the connection between Hyland’s perspective and his own, Simon further argues that broad internalists contend “that part of the explanation of why sports have the features they do, as well as a justification of why they should have such features, is a conception of the good life for human beings” [65] (p. 11). This view of the good life, or a significant part of it, “consists of meeting challenges for their own sake and developing our capacities in order to do so” [65] (p. 11). Few statements in the sport internalism literature illustrate the connections between this account of sport and a particular notion of the good life as effectively as Simon’s words above. The study of how sport philosophers, from the early ontologists to modern broad internalists, have articulated the relationship among teleological elements central to sport encourages a reconsideration of whether today’s dominant emphasis on excellence truly reflects the diverse purposes of sport and, in turn, adequately captures the nature of sporting activities.

7. Beyond the Pursuit of Excellence

Already in the 1970s, philosopher and former Olympic rower Hans Lenk cautioned against only “studying sport under the headline ‘concern for excellence’...As a constructive adventure in ‘self-perfection’, through creative self-discipline in artificial situations of danger” [66] (pp. 5 and 13). He criticized this conception of sport as “individualistic” because it prioritized Protestant cultural norms and attitudes (e.g., inner-world asceticism and achievement orientation), while neglecting “the distinctive proprieties of different sports disciplines with their differing values, goals and attitudes” [66] (p. 43). The primary target, though not the only one, of Lenk’s criticism was Weiss’ narrow, excellence-based understanding of sport. Opposing Suits and broad internalism, philosopher Allan Bäck similarly critiques sport philosophers’ focus on excellence [67], attributing it to the influence of the Victorian view of sport on Western sport theorists. For more on these linkages, see refs. [68,69]. He explicates that “making a sport such a serious moral calling as a mutual quest for excellence does rob it a bit of its playful character, a common feature of traditional sport” [67] (p. 224). While these criticisms may apply to some of the internalist accounts discussed above (for example, Suits treats gameplay as valuable partly because of the experience of effortful exertion it affords), they risk missing the mark when directed at the most recent broad internalist accounts of sport, which, as a reviewer of this manuscript highlighted, draw almost exclusively on Aristotelian-inspired, classical conceptions of excellence tied to human flourishing. That said, some applications of the internalist framework—particularly those involving the assessment of the moral permissibility of doping—remain permeated by principles and attitudes resulting from the Victorian-era valorization of exertion and natural talent [68].

In an article that problematizes attempts to define sport, philosopher Michael Hemmingsen argues that the conflation of descriptive and normative elements is the cause of the aforementioned narrow perspectives on sport. In his view, sport philosophers have historically “buil[t] moral considerations into the definition of sport as an activity...This view builds in what sport (often) *does* into a definition of what sport *is*” [70] (p. 4, original emphasis). While accepting that sport can be, and very often is, a recipient of values, Hemmingsen notes that this might not necessarily be the case. It all depends on the broader social network in which a sport is embedded [70] (p. 5). Nguyen also critiques

this limited view of sport, stating that sport philosophers often “take professional and Olympic sports as its paradigm [neglecting], say, children’s sports or a basketball match between friends” [45] (p. 41). This focus, as per Nguyen, “tends to lead to explanations in terms of excellence and skills development to cash out the value of games” [45], (p. 41). This assessment of the philosophy of sport resonates with Howe’s assertion that: “[m]any attempts to define sport concentrate on one aspect of a complex beast and attempt to reduce explanation to that one aspect” [44] (p. 445).

By conceptualizing sport mainly through the lenses of excellence, sport philosophers reduce their theorizing about sporting activities to an overly restrictive set of purposive elements. The broad internalist understanding of sport seems, perhaps inadvertently, rooted in a specific worldview, one in which the attributes of sport arise from its role in promoting values arising from effort, achievement, and hard work (if viewed from a Victorian standpoint) or human flourishing (if understood from a more classical perspective). Thus, the theory’s focus on excellence represents a continuation of a narrow set of purposes. Although broad internalists argue that these values depict sporting contests in their best light, sport involves more than or something other than the mutual quest for excellence, and alternative interpretations can offer valuable perspectives. This has prompted broad internalist philosophers to critically evaluate the dominant paradigm, with Russell and Kretchmar providing particularly significant insights.

Russell, well known as a leading advocate of broad internalism, proposes a continuist understanding of sport, positing that the two fundamental tenets of broad internalism (excellence and cooperation) are derived from broader moral notions: the Aristotelian view of the good life as involving human flourishing and the Kantian conception of respect for persons [71,72]. Additionally, Russell ascertains that at least a third general moral notion is continuous with sport: play. He says that understanding this concept helps to explain the normative complexity underlying sports, as play introduces an element of disengagement or subversion regarding “worldly standards and practices” [73] (p. 184). As such, participants with a more playful spirit would choose to play along with the different elements of sport, changing some and dropping others. For example, Russell cites competitive shenanigans, that is, strategies that either violate or exploit the rules to gain a competitive advantage. While against the promotion of excellence and cooperation (i.e., the internal principles identified above), these strategies, rooted in play, “add to the challenge, drama, and fun of sport” [73] (p. 184). In Russell’s view, therefore, sport encompasses “a depth of competing values, or value pluralism . . . that the internal principle might seem to discount” [73] (p. 184).

Despite highlighting the incompleteness of the internal principle (i.e., the view that the central purpose of sport is to foster excellence), Russell still thinks that this principle is vital for normative purposes. However, when examining the connections between sport and moral development, he presents a more intricate picture of sport competition, which he defines as a “mutually acceptable quest for excellence through ritualized partisan physical conflict” [74] (p. 237), thereby challenging the prevailing focus on excellence. In Russell’s understanding of competitive sport, the emphasis shifts from the pursuit of excellence to the drive to surpass or dominate one’s opponent. For a similar account of sport, see ref. [75]. Moreover, he observes that “competitive sport institutionalizes relative excellence as an end rather than pursuit of excellence simply for its own sake” [74] (p. 239). This point highlights that Russell believes that sporting practices can serve different purposes. These purposes not only influence the practices and the participants’ engagement but can also conflict, requiring prioritization. As a result, in his critical examination of competitive sport, Russell suggests that societies might need to reform it significantly to prioritize excellence and/or moral growth.

In his attempt to grasp and navigate the complexity of sport, Kretchmar also critiques the constricted character of broad internalism. He explains that its emphasis on excellence is driven by the “Quixote effect” or “performative principle”, which leads sport philosophers to focus on elements like questing for excellence, determination, achievement, and resilience. Although he acknowledges that this is “a persuasive portrayal of sport and its prime values”, Kretchmar confesses that “it does not necessarily follow that it is the only one. Neither does it follow that it requires no additional amendments or clarifications” [76] (p. 369). Instead, he champions a view of sport “as a mere hobby”. As “mere hobbies”, sports shift the focus away from excellence-related ends, such as skill development or winning, towards “the ‘gentle pursuit of a modest competence’” [76] (p. 376). Accepting his understanding of sport, for Kretchmar, “would point us in the direction of pluralistic apologetics for sport, for different ways by which sport can contribute to good living” [76] (p. 376)²⁰. Kretchmar’s point once again reinforces the idea that the purposes of sport and its practices are interconnected, pointing toward a more comprehensive understanding of sport that surpasses the traditional internalism-externalism paradigm.

The theoretical framework favored here challenges the sharp division between what is unique to sport and what is not, showing, as Russell suggests, that sporting principles and non-sporting principles are continuous [71]. Myriad sport theorists have highlighted that social factors, such as the commercial interests of sport governing bodies, substantially affect how competitive sports are played and understood. Consider, for instance, rule changes implemented to make sports like soccer, cricket, or baseball more engaging for non-avid fans (e.g., rules to speed up the game or favor more spectacular plays). These rules have often been met with resistance from traditionalist fans and practitioners, who complain that they hinder the central excellences of their beloved sports. One example is the National Basketball Association’s lenient attitude toward traveling calls, which promotes more spectacular individual plays, especially dunks, but is criticized for diminishing the importance of teamwork. Another example is the introduction of video assistance-refereeing technologies aimed at ensuring accurate umpiring decisions so that outcomes of high-stakes games are determined by athletes’ performance rather than judges’ calls, which has encountered resistance from those who think human error should still be part of the sport, even if it introduces some level of injustice [77]. Correspondingly, the inclusion of transgender women in the women’s category, one of today’s most prominent ethical debates, arises from the conflict between two significantly different perspectives on sport’s purpose: one that sees sport in purely competitive terms, as a contest among similar bodies, and another that views sport as a tool for fostering social change and personal development [78–80]. Recognizing the continuity among the goals, point, and purposes of sport is key for philosophical theories to describe these activities and provide effective normative guidance.

8. Conclusions

The dominant internalist theories in the philosophy of sport often overlook the so-called external values that shape and are reflected in sporting practices. By critically examining the conceptual foundations of the internalism-externalism divide, I have argued for a more comprehensive approach to sport that recognizes its multifaceted nature. Drawing on Nguyen’s account of philosophy as a form of conceptual craftsmanship, my central contribution in this paper has been to introduce and clarify a conceptual lens—the goal–point–purpose triad—that renders visible dimensions of sport that dominant internalist frameworks have not captured fully—although I heavily drawn from such accounts of sport to more clearly unveil such elements. Distinguishing analytically among goals, point, and purposes reveals that much of the internalist literature implicitly

relies on these teleological elements while systematically conflating them. This conflation, I have argued, underwrites a narrow understanding of sport, one that privileges a specific set of purposes—most notably those associated with excellence, striving, and achievement—while marginalizing other ways in which sporting practices are structured, experienced, and valued.

Harmonizing different views of sport is undoubtedly difficult, since attempts to do so often culminate in the imposition of a single conception of sport, one that supposedly shows sporting activities “in their best light”. Yet, as the analysis developed here demonstrates, sporting practices can be presented in a plurality of best lights, depending on the purposes participants pursue and the broader social practices within which sports are embedded. A theory of sport that neglects this plurality risks offering distorted descriptive accounts and impoverished normative guidance. The alternative framework I have sketched in this article does not aim to replace internalism with another monolithic theory. Rather, by treating goals, the point, and purposes as analytically distinct but practically intertwined, it provides conceptual resources for understanding why sporting practices take the diverse forms they do and how normative conflicts in sport arise. In this sense, the contribution is mainly critical, but also incorporates constructive aspects: it equips philosophers of sport with a clearer conceptual vocabulary for interpreting the complexity of sport, evaluating its practices, and engaging more fruitfully with the ethical and practical questions that contemporary sport inevitably raises.

Funding: This research was funded by MCIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033/FEDER, EU., grant number PID2022-139000OB-C21.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable.

Acknowledgments: I want to thank Jason Holt, editor of the special issue, *Philosophy of Sport and Physical Culture*, for his support throughout the submission and review processes. I also sincerely appreciate the thoughtful and extremely detailed comments from the three anonymous evaluators and Dylan Williams, PhD student at Utah State University, on earlier versions of this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Their effort aligns with the following assertion in a philosophical essay titled ‘A Philosophy of Sport’, written at the start of the twentieth century: ‘to enunciate any philosophy of sport, we must, I think, construct some definition which will cover all the pursuits which are distinguished as sport in any of these acceptations of the term’ [10] (p. 879).
- ² Hence, I will only use the terms ‘internal’ and ‘external’ when describing internalism. In outlining my approach, I will avoid these terms in an effort to situate the discussion on the nature of sport beyond the internalist paradigm.
- ³ Given the prevailing emphasis on elucidating the internal elements of sport, especially excellence, the philosophy of sport seems to be venturing into a new phase centered on clarifying the nature of sporting excellence [21,22] and formulating interpretations of the intrinsic nature of each particular sport [23]. Thus, the newer generations of sport philosophers will concentrate their efforts on developing philosophies of cricket, football, running, etc., especially on the identification of the excellences that participants exhibit and develop.
- ⁴ The analysis of the teleological aspects of sport in this article does not necessitate a complete definition of the term (assuming that is even feasible). For further insight into how to potentially define sport while accounting for its complex nature, see ref. [26].
- ⁵ Nguyen’s insights on life and games led me to recognize—consistent with this article’s opening paragraph—the importance of drawing a sharper distinction between the point and the purposes of sport [27].
- ⁶ Suits provides examples of games whose goals are extremely impactful, such as saving someone’s life. However, this hardly seems to be the case for most, if not all, sports.

- Note that the triviality of the goals does not mean the activity is without significance. People can, and often do, approach sporting activities with a tremendous level of seriousness. Eleanor Metheny observes that individuals associate sporting activities with different personal, contextual, and cultural elements to give them a purpose [37]. By referencing symbolic philosophers Ernst Cassirer and Susanne K. Langer, she terms these meanings connotations and regards them as inherent parts of the meaning, or nature, of sport.
- For a similar description, see ref. [21].
- As local essentialist sport philosopher Jon Pike writes, ‘the key individuating property across sports is the basic actions or combinations of actions that different sports involve’, such as kicking, running, throwing, and so on [40] (pp. 327–328). These actions ‘are the essential identity-preserving properties of a sport that must be present for the sport itself to be present’ [40] (pp. 327–328). However, these claims about the point of sport need not tie the framework here to ontological essentialism à la Plato. The framework does not need to assume the existence of a standalone essence of sport waiting to be discovered or captured. The point of sporting activities, per Marmor’s [41] metaphysics of social practices, is ‘determined by a pattern of purposeful use, that is, some regularity of conduct accompanied by collective, public, learnable attitudes’ (p. 72). ‘What matters,’ Marmor explains, ‘is the shared understandings of the participants about the point of their practice, not the question of whether those understandings reflect, or not, any truths that might exist independently of their attitudes’ [41] (p. 82). Of course, some of these patterns and understandings can change over time. However, two considerations must be kept in mind. First, as Marmor [42] suggests, social interest and ‘social needs’ related to the development of specialized skills to overcome specific challenges are unlikely to disappear. Second, with the wide array of extant social practices, a substantial modification in the point of sport could transform it into an already identifiable activity, such as a scripted performance.
- The roots of this proposal are traceable to Kretchmar’s [46] ‘soft metaphysical’ inquiry into sport, where he explains that ‘cultural structures’ shape the structure of sport. Also in the same collective volume, philosophers Johan Steenbergen and Jan Tamboer draw on German philosophers like Lenk and Gunter Gebauer to advocate for the ‘pluriformity’ of sport. They muse that ‘[s]port has become a “variously shaped”, pluriform, reality with regard to motives of participation, “specific nature” of the practice, participants features, grade of institutional organization, and so on’ [47] (p. 47).
- In his detailed examination of them, Kretchmar highlights how they might conflict with the broad internalist notion of excellence [48]. While many of them can be compatible with a weak view of excellence (as simply trying to succeed), he clarifies that the different understandings of sport are hardly monolithic; multiple purposes can coexist, sometimes in tension, within concrete sporting practices.
- For Loland, the key here lies in elucidating which of the participants’ intentional goals are moral goals, that is, those that make sport valuable and meaningful [29].
- Similar inspiration can be found in the critical theorist Peter Sloterdijk’s spherological theory [53,54].
- As an avid reviewer of the manuscript noted, the horizontal-vertical axis metaphor might be problematic, as the notion of axis implies independence and distinctness, which is hardly what Rouse, and my use of his framework for illustrative purposes, seeks: showing the multiple ways in which the constitutive elements of a sport, either those specific to the sport or those related to individuals’ engagement in other practices and membership to the larger society, interconnect.
- Rouse offers a similar, though less insightful, example by analyzing the sport of volleyball [52] (p. 252).
- In addition to the point of sport, as explained above, some degree of agreement concerning the driving purpose of sporting practices is crucial for maintaining and fostering them. As Morgan avows: ‘while this boundary marking countenances other reasons for engaging in sport in addition to those that have directly to do with the logic of its practice, it does so only if those other reasons don’t impede or otherwise interfere with the point and purpose of its practice’ [17] (p. 228).
- One can speculate that the main motivation for this choice was North American philosophers’ concerted efforts to demarcate their field of inquiry from other social and humanistic disciplines engaged with sport, most notably sport history and sociology [57,58].
- It is important to note that Suits clarifies that Utopia primarily functions as a tool for exploring the kind of human life most worth living. Accordingly, the conclusions he draws from his utopia are meant to instruct individuals about how best to live their lives.
- Some games have a different emphasis. To illustrate this claim, Nguyen uses the example of drinking and partying games, where the key experience is hardly striving or achieving but failing to accomplish the goal of the game [45].
- Kretchmar acknowledges that the two views of sport he thematizes in his paper can be compatible. For instance, he notes that the “modest competence” view of sport emphasizes self-improvement, which often leads to the drive toward excellence and mastery in the Quixotesque model. Still, his examination is intended primarily to highlight the distinction between engaging in sport to pursue excellence and to seek modest competence. As such, he concludes: “The purpose here has not been to erase the haunting and lovable image of Don Quixote with his noble quests, high ideals, even his irrational hopes, and dreams. Nor has it been to argue that the mutual quest for excellence through challenge cannot be a useful and powerful apologetic for sport. The intent has only been to show that it is far from the only one” [76] (p. 380).

References

1. Nguyen, C.T. Beyond Argument: The Creative Craft of Philosophy Writing. Daily Nous, 15 July 2025. Available online: <https://dailynous.com/2025/07/15/beyond-argument-the-creative-craft-of-philosophy-writing-guest-post/> (accessed on 20 January 2026).
2. Cortina Orts, A. *Aporophobia: Why We Reject the Poor Instead of Helping Them*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2022; ISBN 978-0-691-23942-2.
3. Simon, R.L.; Torres, C.R.; Hager, P.F. *Fair Play: The Ethics of Sport*; Westview Press: Boulder, CO, USA, 2014; ISBN 978-0-8133-4920-6.
4. Simon, R.L. *Fair Play: Sports, Values, and Society*, 1st ed.; Westview Press: Boulder, CO, USA, 1991; ISBN 0-8133-7973-3.
5. Dworkin, R. *Law's Empire*; Belknap Press: Cambridge, MA, USA, 1986; ISBN 0-674-51835-7.
6. Meier, K.V. Triad Trickery: Playing with Sport and Games. *J. Philos. Sport* **1988**, *15*, 11–30. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
7. Suits, B. Tricky Triad: Games, Play, and Sport. *J. Philos. Sport* **1988**, *15*, 1–9. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
8. Carlson, C. A Three-Pointer: Revisiting Three Crucial Issues in the “Tricky Triad” of Play, Games, and Sport. In *Defining Sport: Conceptions and Borderlines*; Lexington Books: Lanham, MD, USA, 2017; pp. 3–21, ISBN 978-1-4985-1157-5.
9. Schieman, K. Hopscotch Dreams: Coming to Terms with the Cultural Significance of Sport. In *Defining Sport: Conceptions and Borderlines*; Lexington Books: Lanham, MD, USA, 2017; pp. 45–64, ISBN 978-1-4985-1157-5.
10. Graves, H. A philosophy of sport. *Contemp. Rev.* **1900**, *78*, 877–893.
11. Meier, K.V. On the Inadequacies of Sociological Definitions of Sport. *Int. Rev. Sport Sociol.* **1981**, *16*, 79–102. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
12. Suits, B. *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia*; D.R. Godine: Boston, MA, USA, 1978; ISBN 978-0-87923-840-7.
13. Devine, J.W.; López Frías, F.J. Philosophy of Sport. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; Zalta, E.N., Ed.; Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University: Stanford, CA, USA, 2020.
14. López Frías, F.J. Broad Internalism and Interpretation: A Plurality of Interpretivist Approaches. In *Defining Sport: Conceptions and Borderlines*; Klein, S.E., Ed.; Lexington Books: Lanham, MD, USA, 2017; ISBN 978-1-4985-1157-5.
15. Francis, L. Categorization, Virtues in Sport, and the Relevance of Social Injustice: A Tribute to J.S. Russell. *J. Philos. Sport* **2025**, *52*, 202–216. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
16. Imbrisevic, M. Redefining the Nature and Purpose of Sport: Transgender Women’s Inclusion. *Fair Play* **2024**, *26*, 79–98.
17. Morgan, W.J. *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction*; University of Illinois Press: Champaign, IL, USA, 1994; ISBN 0-252-06361-9.
18. Morgan, W.J. The Normativity of Sport: A Historicist Take on Broad Internalism. *J. Philos. Sport* **2016**, *43*, 27–39. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
19. Morgan, W.J. Broad Internalism, Deep Conventions, Moral Entrepreneurs, and Sport. *J. Philos. Sport* **2012**, *39*, 65–100. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
20. Russell, J.S. Are Rules All an Umpire Has to Work With? *J. Philos. Sport* **1999**, *26*, 27–49. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
21. Devine, J.W. Elements of Excellence. *J. Philos. Sport* **2022**, *49*, 195–211. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
22. Thompson, D.B.; Lopez Frías, F.J. Flourishing as the Standard for Evaluating the Social Practice of Competitive Sport. *Dilemata* **2020**, *33*, 185–197.
23. Borge, S. Two Concepts of Sporting Excellence. *J. Philos. Sport* **2024**, *51*, 302–315. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
24. López Frías, F.J. William J. Morgan’s ‘Conventionalist Internalism’ Approach. Furthering Internalism? A Critical Hermeneutical Response. *Sport Ethics Philos.* **2014**, *8*, 157–171. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
25. López Frías, F.J. Ethics of Sport: Origins, Main Approaches, and Future Challenges. In *Applied Ethics from Medicine to Humor*; Cortina, A., Correa Casanova, M., Eds.; Integrated Science; Springer International Publishing: Cham, Switzerland, 2024; Volume 21, pp. 133–150, ISBN 978-3-031-59008-5.
26. Hemmingsen, M. Mapping the Terrain of Sport: A Core-Periphery Model. *J. Philos. Sport* **2024**, *51*, 102–124. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
27. Nguyen, C.T. Games Unlike Life: A Reply to Camp and Millgram. *J. Ethics Soc. Phil.* **2023**, *23*, 477. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
28. Suits, B. What Is a Game? *Philos. Sci.* **1967**, *34*, 148–156. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
29. Loland, S. *Fair Play in Sport a Moral Norm System*; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2002.
30. Suits, B. Games and Paradox. *Philos. Sci.* **1969**, *36*, 316–321. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
31. Kretchmar, R.S. “A Games” and Their Relationship to T and E Games. *Sport Ethics Philos.* **2015**, *9*, 47–57. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
32. Meier, K.V. Performance Prestidigitation. *J. Philos. Sport* **1989**, *16*, 13–33. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
33. Hurka, T. The Parallel Goods of Knowledge and Achievement. *Erkenntnis* **2020**, *85*, 589–608. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
34. Landgraf, L.A. A Defence of Tanking in Sports. *J. Philos. Sport* **2024**, *51*, 89–101. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
35. Kretchmar, R.S. A Revised Definition of Games: An Analysis of Grasshopper Errors, Omissions, and Ambiguities. *Sport Ethics Philos.* **2019**, *13*, 277–292. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
36. Suits, B. The Elements of Sport. In *The Philosophy of Sport: A Collection of Original Essays*; Osterhoudt, R., Ed.; Thomas: Springfield, IL, USA, 1973; pp. 9–19.
37. Metheny, E. *Movement and Meaning*; McGraw-Hill: New York, NY, USA, 1968.
38. Fraleigh, W.P. *Right Actions in Sport: Ethics for Contestants*; Human Kinetics Publishers: Champaign, IL, USA, 1984; ISBN 0-931250-55-2.

39. Torres, C.R. What Counts as Part of a Game? A Look at Skills. *J. Philos. Sport* **2000**, *27*, 81–92. [CrossRef]
40. Pike, J. Doping, “Mechanical Doping,” and Local Essentialism in the Individuation of Sports. In *Ethics in Sport*; Morgan, W.J., Ed.; Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL, USA, 2018; pp. 321–336, ISBN 978-1-4925-5676-3.
41. Marmor, A. *Foundations of Institutional Reality*; Oxford University Press: New York, NY, USA, 2023; ISBN 978-0-19-765734-8.
42. Marmor, A. *Social Conventions: From Language to Law*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2009; ISBN 978-0-691-14090-2.
43. Morgan, W.J. *Sport and Moral Conflict: A Conventionalist Theory*; Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA, USA, 2020; ISBN 978-1-4399-1539-4.
44. Howe, L.A. Not Everything Is a Contest: Sport, Nature Sport, and *Friluftsliv*. *J. Philos. Sport* **2019**, *46*, 437–453. [CrossRef]
45. Nguyen, C.T. *Games: Agency as Art*; Oxford University Press: New York, NY, USA, 2020.
46. Kretchmar, R.S. Soft Metaphysics: A Precursor to Good Sports Ethics. In *Ethics and Sport*; E & FN Spon: London, UK, 1998; pp. 19–34, ISBN 978-0-203-47664-2.
47. Steenbergen, J.; Tamboer, J. Ethics and the Double Character of Sport: An Attempt to Systematize Discussion of the Ethics of Sport. In *Ethics and Sport*; E & FN Spon: London, UK, 1998; pp. 35–54, ISBN 978-0-203-47664-2.
48. Kretchmar, R.S. Pluralistic Internalism. *J. Philos. Sport* **2015**, *42*, 83–100. [CrossRef]
49. Bradford, G. *Achievement*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2015; ISBN 978-0-19-871402-6.
50. Morgan, W.J. *Why Sports Morally Matter*; Routledge: Oxfordshire, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2006; ISBN 978-0-415-35773-9.
51. Del Mar, M. Must We Play to Win? A Reply to Morgan. *Philos. Soc. Sci.* **2015**, *45*, 266–272. [CrossRef]
52. Rouse, J. *Social Practices as Biological Niche Construction*; University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, USA, 2023; ISBN 978-0-226-82797-1.
53. López Frías, F.J.; Gimeno Monfort, X. Esferología Hermenéutica Del Deporte. Sobre El Impacto de La Obra de Peter Sloterdijk En La Filosofía Del Deporte. *Thémata Rev. De. Filos.* **2018**, *58*, 65–86.
54. Sloterdijk, P. *You Must Change Your Life: On Anthropotechnics*; Polity: Cambridge, UK, 2014; ISBN 978-0-7456-4922-1.
55. McNamee, M. Sport, Ethics and Philosophy; Context, History, Prospects. *Sport Ethics Philos.* **2007**, *1*, 1–6. [CrossRef]
56. MacIntyre, A.C. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed.; University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame, IN, USA, 2007; ISBN 0-585-31107-2.
57. Anderson, D.R. The Humanity of Movement or “It’s Not Just a Gym Class”. *Quest* **2002**, *54*, 87–96. [CrossRef]
58. Zeigler, E.F. *Philosophy of Physical Activity Education (Including Educational Sport)*; Trafford: Bloomington, IN, USA, 2010; ISBN 978-1-4269-2532-0.
59. López Frías, F.J.; Yorke, C.C. Bernard Suits’ Return of the Grasshopper: A Philosophical Context and Novel Directions for Future Research. In *Return of the Grasshopper: Games, Leisure and the Good Life in the Third Millennium*; Routledge: London, UK, 2022; pp. xiii–xxxvii. ISBN 978-1-003-26239-8.
60. Mitchell, L. Reconsidering the Grasshopper: On the Reception of Bernard Suits in Game Studies. *Game Stud.* **2020**, *20*. Available online: https://gamestudies.org/2003/articles/mitchell_liam (accessed on 20 January 2026).
61. McLaughlin, D.W. *Reinventing the Wheel: On Games and the Good Life*; The Pennsylvania State University: Monroeville, PA, USA, 2008.
62. Kretchmar, R.S. The Intelligibility of Suits’s Utopia: The View from Anthropological Philosophy. *J. Philos. Sport* **2006**, *33*, 67–77. [CrossRef]
63. López Frías, F.J. Psychoanalyzing the Grasshopper: Society, Work and Repressed Play in Suits’ Riddle. *Sport Ethics Philos.* **2021**, *15*, 251–265. [CrossRef]
64. Weiss, P. *Sport: A Philosophic Inquiry*; Southern Illinois University Press: Carbondale, IL, USA, 1971; Volume AB85, ISBN 978-0-8093-0501-8.
65. Simon, R.L. Internalism and Internal Values in Sport. *J. Philos. Sport* **2000**, *27*, 1–16. [CrossRef]
66. Lenk, H. *Social Philosophy of Athletics. A Pluralistic and Practice-Oriented Philosophical Analysis of Top Level Amateur Sport*; Stipes Publishing Company: Champaign, IL, USA, 1979.
67. Bäck, A. The Paper World of Bernard Suits. *J. Philos. Sport* **2008**, *35*, 156–174. [CrossRef]
68. López Frías, F.J. Unnatural Technology in a “Natural” Practice? Human Nature and Performance-Enhancing Technology in Sport. *Philosophies* **2019**, *4*, 35. [CrossRef]
69. López Frías, F.J.; Yorke, C.C.; Kobiela, F.; Bartel, C.; Bradford, G.; Kretchmar, S.; Russell, J.S.; Morgan, W.J. Book Symposium on Return of the Grasshopper: Games, Leisure and the Good Life in the Third Millennium. *Sport Ethics Philos.* **2024**, *18*, 548–587. [CrossRef]
70. Hemmingsen, M. Towards a Value-Neutral Definition of Sport. *Sport Ethics Philos.* **2023**, *19*, 4–19. [CrossRef]
71. Russell, J.S. Broad Internalism and the Moral Foundations of Sport. In *Ethics in Sport*; Morgan, W.J., Ed.; Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL, USA, 2007; pp. 51–66. ISBN 978-0-7360-6428-6.

72. Russell, J.S. Play and the Moral Limits of Sport. In *Ethics in Sport*; Morgan, W.J., Ed.; Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL, USA, 2018; pp. 205–222, ISBN 978-1-4925-5676-3.
73. Russell, J.S. Remarks on the Progress of a Jurisprudence of Sport. *NYL Sch. L. Rev.* **2018**, *63*, 175.
74. Russell, J.S. Competitive Sport, Moral Development and Peace. In *The Bloomsbury Companion to the Philosophy of Sport*; Torres, C.R., Ed.; Bloomsbury Publishing: London, UK, 2014; pp. 228–244, ISBN 1-4081-8257-2.
75. Borge, S. *The Philosophy of Football*; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 2019; ISBN 978-0-367-18091-1.
76. Kretchmar, R.S. Sport as a (Mere) Hobby: In Defense of ‘the Gentle Pursuit of a Modest Competence’. *J. Philos. Sport* **2019**, *46*, 367–382. [[CrossRef](#)]
77. Pérez Triviño, J.L. The Epistemic Limits of VAR. In *Sport, Law and Philosophy*; Imbrišević, M., Ed.; Routledge: London, UK, 2023; ISBN 978-1-003-09635-1.
78. Berg, A. Non-Ideal Theory, Cultural Studies, and the Transgender Inclusion Debate. *J. Philos. Sport* **2023**, *50*, 419–437. [[CrossRef](#)]
79. English, C.; Pieper, L.P. ‘This Bill Is About Fairness’: An Argument Against the Prioritization of Competitive Fairness at the Expense of Justice in US School Sport. In *Justice for Trans Athletes*; Durham Greey, A., Jefferson Lenskyj, H., Eds.; Emerald Studies in Sport and Gender; Emerald Publishing Limited: Leeds, UK, 2022; pp. 109–133, ISBN 978-1-80262-985-9.
80. López Frías, F.J.; Torres, C.R. Embodied Experience, Embodied Advantage, and the Inclusion of Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport: Expanded Framework, Criticisms, and Policy Recommendations. *Sport Ethics Philos.* **2023**, *18*, 527–547. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.