***Philosophy Lab***

***Each group should submit their discussion notes with a list of the names of all group members.***

***Issue 1: Are rules the same thing as ethics, when discussing sports?***

* ***Sometimes the right thing to do isn't always in the rulebook.***
  + Ex: For a long time, certain performance-enhancing substances were not covered by the rules of baseball.  Many players took them because **it wasn't against the rules**.....but it still yielded them an unfair advantage over ordinary mortals who did just their training alone.
  + Ex: Although performance-enhancing drugs may be an older issue, rulebooks still do not necessarily cover surgical procedures intended to **enhance** athletic performance....which is becoming increasingly possible.  This may potentially change the athletic landscape to "he who can afford the best medical staff wins".
* **Sometimes you can be completely in the rules and still behave unethically.**
  + Ex: It is common, at the end of football games when the winning team has possession of the ball, for them to "run the clock", a process of running plays in such a manner which allows the clock to continue ticking downwards, while the team deliberately delays the game as long as possible without penalty in order to prevent the other team from having enough time to make a comeback.  **While it is fair according to the rules**, is it cheating to win by "not living up to the spirit of the game", which seems (at least to me) to be more about playing football and not waiting on the clock?
  + Ex: In women's tennis, age rules allow a 14-year-old to compete against a 30-year-old.  How is this 'rule' determined?  On what basis does this become 'fair' just because it's in the rulebook?  If the same thing occurred in football, people would riot in the parking lots (not that 49ers & Raiders fans wouldn't anyway)....

***Issue 2: Do sports players, being public figures, have any obligation/duty to be good role models?***

* Ex: Tiger Woods.  Enough said.

***Issue 3: Does violence in sport affect our attitudes towards violent behavior?***

* Ex: MMA?
  + If MMA is so bad for people's attitudes, why don't boxers and wrestlers (who undergo similar training for similar events) seem to take as much heat?  (It makes sense that martial artists wouldn't since there is often a mental/emotional component to their training.)
* Ex: WWE?
  + How easy is it for young kids who enjoy WWE to become desensitized to human violence (like smacking people with chairs....which technically qualifies as assault with a deadly weapon in the right circumstances)....it's not the same thing as video game violence, which at least has a sense of digital fiction to it.....kids see real human beings doing serious harm to real human beings.....arguably, chair smashing is worse than any MMA hit.
* Are any negative race/gender/class stereotypes being reinforced by violence in certain sports?  (The Ortiz/Mayweather fight became a pretty heated Mexican vs. Black issue on some FB walls and internet forums.)
* How do we define 'appropriate contact' for a sport?  Is there a threshold at certain skill levels?  Age groups?  Developmental milestones?  How can a standard be constructed that isn't purely arbitrary (like those 14-year-old girls in the women's tennis division).
* What is the "right" emphasis on winning, anyway?

***Issue 4:  Has Title IX changed views on gender equality in our society?***

* Ex: Many women's teams are still poorly funded, and their athletes receive much lower pay than their male counterparts.  Their games & events also tend to attract less viewers....so is lower pay ethically defensible?
* Ex: Still relatively very few men in cheerleading, gymnastics, dance.
* Are there still forms of backlash in our society against strong women?
* How can we better promote gender equality in sports?

***Issue 5: Is it right for sports to present the appearance of upward mobility in society to young people of lower socioeconomic standing?***

* Ex:  Plenty of young wannabes in every sport at younger years....they all think they're going pro, often at the expense of adequate preparation in school and other opportunities to learn marketable skills.  Very few of those wannabes become 'get-to-bes'.  What happens to them?  What happens to the Boobie Miles-es of our youth sports (Friday Night Lights film reference).
* Who gets to play 'real sports' in higher education, really?  Isn't college basketball just basketball's more popular version of the "minor leagues" in baseball?
* Ex:  Plenty of high schools devote significant resources to their athletics programs because the potential for athletic scholarships is a major motivator for players who might not otherwise be college-ready.  The elimination of such programs, as a response to budget shortfalls in education, causes a community uproar, as witnessed in the East Side HS District (which is interestingly enough, a community with a high percentage of students with low socioeconomic backgrounds).  Do high school sports programs add value to the educational program of the school?

***Issues 6: Business, Media, Sport, and Ethics***

* Considering the high salaries of pro players, and the escalating prices of tickets, parking, concessions.....along with government subsidies given to attract teams to certain cities, is it fair for pro players to make the kind of money that they do, given that their million-plus-a-year contracts are paid for (in part) from that income?
* Should the operations of team franchises, which are funded by taxpayer dollars and entertainment dollars, be open and transparent to the public?
* Should teams be allowed to change locations at will, and relocate to cities that offer them better perks, even at the expense of some of the local economy that they're leaving behind (consider the now empty-stadium, etc)?
* Would sports survive without the media?
* Does the media adequately portray the risks and dangers of participating in sports?
* Should the government use sport as a diplomatic tool to promote American ideology and values? (i.e. negotiations with the Olympic Committee, etc)