

# The Sport Chaplain

## Adding a “Game Face” to the Many Faces of Chaplaincy

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When Americans think of homeland security, they tend to think of counterterrorism. While operations to prevent acts of terrorism, be they foreign or domestic, are unquestionably at the heart of the Department of Homeland Security’s mission, counterterrorism is only one of the department’s many responsibilities.

In fact, a recent study conducted by the Naval Postgraduate School asked one question of its graduates: “What does homeland security mean to you?” The results of the study revealed that “almost 40 percent—the largest group—gave a definition that blended several elements,” including, but not limited to, interventions in terrorism, national security, natural disaster preparedness and response, and “all-hazards,” which is a broad idea that remains somewhat undefined (Bellavita, 2008). Taken together, this study—along with the variety of different responsibilities under homeland security’s umbrella, like FEMA and the U.S. Coast Guard, for which homeland security is responsible—reveals that there are indeed many faces to homeland security.

Given the stressful and high-intensity experiences that homeland security officials, military service personnel, and emergency responders face, it seems logical to infer that their human “sense of meaning can become totally disrupted” by tragedy, terror, or trauma (Fair & Warden, 2012). This creates a great need for professionals who can care for the emotional and spiritual needs of those sworn to protect our homeland. These professionals are invaluable to the successful operation of homeland security because they “[help] those who help others,” and their positions range from psychologists to counselors to chaplains.

Just as homeland security has many faces of its operation, “the caring profession” has many faces as well. The most recent Executive Summit for the American Board for Certification in Homeland Security held a panel discussion entitled “Many Faces of Chaplaincy,” which discussed more popular areas of chaplaincy such as fire and rescue, hospital, and law enforcement. In this article, I introduce sport chaplaincy as another rapidly emerging face of chaplaincy and explain its vitality as a profession, even in the context of homeland security.



▶ South Carolina team chaplain Adrian Despres and the team pray for running back Marquis Lattimore after the game against Tennessee on Saturday, October 27, 2012, at Williams-Brice Stadium in Columbia, South Carolina. (Tim Dominick/The State/MCT)



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**ABSTRACT:** This article discusses the emerging profession of sport chaplaincy as one of the many faces within chaplaincy. Academics have paid little attention to the relevance, function, and vitality of chaplains working within sports, despite the profession's growth at both credentialed and volunteer levels. The vast and rapid development of organizations such as Athletes in Action, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the National Institute of Sport Professionals reveals the need for such a specialized field within chaplaincy at the national level. I approach this topic by explaining the six primary roles of sport chaplains: Sport plays a powerful role in bringing Americans together, and sport chaplains in particular can help foster a sense of community that can even act as a new face of homeland security chaplaincy.

**KEYWORDS:** Sport chaplain, sport spirituality, emotional security, inner resources, normalcy, inclusivity, introspection, pastoral care, climate of trust, ethical mentality

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Explain the ways that sport participation and sport spectatorship “unify individuals”
- Identify the most common challenge sport chaplains encounter
- Describe how emotional-spiritual stress can affect an athlete’s physical health
- List and describe the six distinct responsibilities of sport chaplains
- Explain how “self-magnification” increases, rather than diminishes, athletic stress
- Interpret how sport chaplains assist athletes in bringing others together and promoting a sense of normalcy and security
- Identify an example of a socio-spiritual growth opportunity present in sport
- Identify examples of current sport scandals that can threaten homeland security, and that chaplains could help to quell
- Summarize, within chaplaincy, the importance of “being present” in establishing identity and trust

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** Chaplains, counselors, and/or psychologists

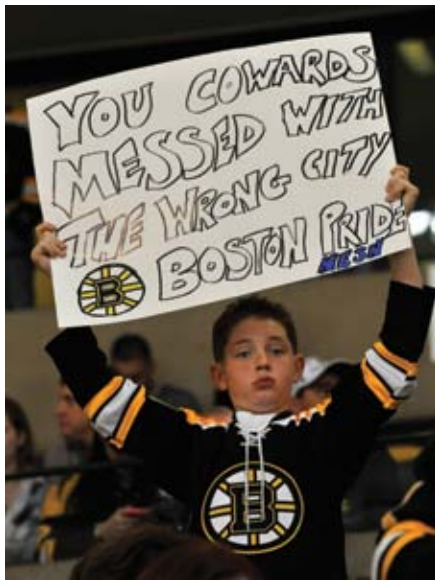
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► Owen Halley, 10 years old, holds a sign referencing the Boston Marathon bombings while attending an NHL game between the Boston Bruins and the Buffalo Sabers at TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts, Wednesday, April 17, 2013. (Christopher Evans/Boston Herald/MCT)



After any disaster that causes trauma, whether it be a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or some form of moral evil, the primary key to recovery—after physical, emotional, and spiritual first-aid, of course—is to reestablish a routine. That is, to go on with the flow of life as usual. Recall, as an example of homegrown terrorism, the Beltway Sniper attacks of 2002 that held citizens in Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland in a “grip of terror” for more than 23 days (Fries, 2003). In order to break free from this “grip of terror,” citizens were encouraged to “[get] back—as much as possible—to your normal routine... [this] will help minimize traumatic stress, anxiety, and hopelessness” (Segal & Smith, 2013). Gradually, the citizens made their way back to a sense of normalcy; chief among their activities was returning to public sporting events after having stayed away for fear of further attacks.

To argue that sports in the United States (and throughout the world, for that matter) are not a major source of commonality, or to suggest that sports do not bring people together, would conflict almost diametrically with both observable and reported data. In the United States alone, sports are easily the largest entertainment market, generating more than 470 billion dollars per year in revenue (Plunkett Research, 2013). Without a doubt, the sports world has become a staple and an unwavering symbol of pride within our homeland. Revenue statistics alone, which only account for professional sports and not college, high school, or little league, reveal that sports unify Americans. Sports, like other rituals, bring us together for a common purpose: When the country undergoes a tragic event, how do we tend to memorialize and re-

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member those who have fallen? We become active participants in special ceremonies; moments of silence; pre-game expressions of faith, community, and service to victims, communities, and those left to carry on. Perhaps one of the most emotionally-charged and more recent expressions of this sports-generated unity and patriotism was the singing of our National Anthem at an NHL game at TD Garden Arena featuring the Boston Bruins and the Buffalo Sabers only two days after the Boston Marathon bombings. Since sports unify people and help establish a sense of normalcy in day-to-day life, it follows that athletes—the human beings that comprise the sports world—serve a critical and unique function in this unification and establishing of normalcy. Sport is, “without a doubt, a human activity” (Mazza, 2008).

Because sport is indeed a human activity, “it is necessary to realize that the human persons who play the roles of the athletes are not defined by their participation in the sport and, thus, are complex individuals incapable, like all of us, to be simplified” (Maranise, 2009). Part of the complexity of our human personhood is that “most of all, people need to feel relatively safe” (Schmookler, 1996). Is it not also a primary goal of homeland security to provide Americans with a “sense of security?” As able and successful as homeland security may be in thwarting terrorist attacks or responding to natural disasters, the fact remains that one’s security is based not on exterior stimuli; rather, it is internally based. Cummings and Davies explain emotional security as “a person’s feeling of having the inner resources to confront new and threatening situations” (1994). Athletes are no different from everyone else in their need to “feel relatively safe.” Homeland security personnel,



◀ Boston Bruins fans Yvonne and Jake Patterson cheer at the start of an NHL game between the Bruins and the Buffalo Sabers at TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts, Wednesday, April 17, 2013. (Christopher Evans/Boston Herald/MCT)

◀ The St. Louis Cardinals' Matt Carpenter, right, walks off after striking out to end the game as the the Boston Red Sox begin to celebrate at Fenway Park in Boston, Massachusetts, on Wednesday, October 30, 2013. The Red Sox won, 6–1, to clinch the championship. (Robert Cohen/St. Louis Post-Dispatch/MCT)



such as operatives, military, and responders can (and do well to) ensure the physical safety of citizens; however, when catastrophe strikes, “it is likely that they will ask spiritual and existential questions,” which can quickly become what we might term a “crisis,” or a “crisis of faith” (Maranise, 2013). When catastrophe leads to such spiritual and existential questions, athletes often express concerns, beliefs, and frustrations that “are inextricably bound to their sporting experience and their psychological interpretation of the world” (Watson & Nesti, 2005). To help athletes navigate these difficulties, there is a need for chaplains to cultivate those “inner resources” that human beings need in order to feel secure and whole, specifically from an athletic perspective. In this case, the general idea behind a form of chaplaincy that is specifically focused on athletes follows the “unless you’ve walked a mile in their shoes” philosophy. While I do not doubt the competency of hospital, rescue, and law enforcement chaplaincy, “athletic minded” chaplains can best assist athletes in crisis; otherwise, there is a risk of alienating athletes from accepting and seeking further assistance and intervention. Furthermore, it is important that athletes benefit from effective chaplaincy, as they are integral parts of weaving a tapestry of normalcy within our homeland. Right now, our inability to recognize the power of sport chaplaincy is actually harming us, especially given the number of Americans who are touched by sports in so many ways. In a recent interview discussing his role as a chaplain and the Certified Master Chaplain program, Chaplain Jesus Huertas (2013) said, “I would like to see this program expand...because, in my opinion, we are just beginning to scratch the surface.”

Sport chaplaincy might not be new to the world or even to American sporting organizations (like the Fellowship of Christian Athletes or Athletes in Action), but it would certainly be new to homeland security. Recognizing the vitality and usefulness of sport chaplaincy could very well help us “scratch beyond the surface.”

The sport chaplain is “a lay or ordained member of the clergy who provides spiritual care for athletes” (Waller, Dzikus, & Hardin, 2010). In regard to what athletes look for in a sport chaplain, Francesco mentions that “it would be good to have a better understanding of the challenges in the life of an athlete” (2008). Perhaps the most common challenge that a sport chaplain experiences is spiritual-emotional trauma following a major, or even career-ending, athletic injury. According to Robinson, Segal, & Smith, sports injuries rank number one in a list of commonly overlooked causes to emotional and psychological trauma (2013). The fact that this challenge for athletes is “commonly overlooked” further illustrates the need for athlete-specific intervention and training in chaplaincy. Also appearing on the list are recovery from surgery (which many athletes undergo to correct previous

injuries), the breakup of a significant relationship (often a deeply personal and complicated matter that can cause further emotional self-injury or could affect relationships with teammates), and humiliating or deeply disappointing experiences (which, for many athletes, often include performing below their self-imposed expectations or meeting the expectations of coaches, parents, and spectators). These are but a few of the challenges athletes face where sport chaplains could be of assistance. Many of the aforementioned challenges are highly superficial or exterior (things that first happen in the public eye, and then become internalized personal issues). Athletes, however, also experience interior struggles that may never become public but that also may affect their performance, their relationships with their team members and family, and their physical health: “Many anxieties experienced by the athlete can and do typically arouse physiological symptoms” (Maranise, 2013). While every person is responsible for his or her spouse, work, home, children, social life, and their religious life, an athlete also must concern him or herself with practice, exercise, and dietary regimens, as well as constant performance improvement. Such stress is only magnified by the expectations of others, constantly critiquing athletes or watching their every move. Not to mention, athletes actually increase their own stress by imposing limits or unreasonable expectations for performance in the belief that skill improvement will diminish exterior stressors. In this case, athletes might begin playing for reasons other than entertainment, leisure, camaraderie, or enjoyment (the healthy reasons for competition), and may “seek to unload their frustrations via sport making it an escape valve for social disorder” (Nanni, 2008). Sport chaplains must be prepared to respond to these types of emotional-spiritual-existential crises, which, if left unattended, could become crises of faith with far-reaching and chronic negative affects. If our athletes are properly attended to with the help of specialized chaplains, then they can continue bringing people together in this country, and in other countries around the world, as well as contributing to the sense of normalcy that helps make Americans feel secure.



**S**port chaplains, regardless of their own religious denomination or the organization they represent, such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), Catholic Athletes for Christ (CAC) and Athletes in Action (AIA), certainly have their share of responsibilities. Many, like counseling and responding to spiritual-emotional crises, are taught and easily understood by chaplains of any coverage area; however, some responsibilities are specific to sport chaplains alone. According to Johnson (2008), sport chaplains have six specific responsibilities to both individual and collective teams of athletes:

- 1** Displaying and maintaining a spirit of inclusivity toward all religious traditions, beliefs, and spiritual practices, or, in other words, making sure no athlete in need is excluded because of personal indifference;
- 2** Balancing the requirements to be both “clerical” or “ministerial” in style as well as academic in educational standards and technique;
- 3** Cultivating relationships that are trustworthy and non-judgmental while maintaining a professional attitude and respecting an athlete’s confidentiality;
- 4** Encouraging introspection and reflection based on “big-picture thinking,” or the idea that athletes ought to view themselves, their performance, and their teams as parts of an integrated whole;
- 5** Serving with a “mission-mindedness,” that is, realizing that as a chaplain, one’s services are provided at no cost, so sport chaplains should not expect regular pay; however, if the team they work for is large enough, they could have their travel expenses paid and receive an office;
- 6** Recognizing the limitations of the role of chaplain, i.e. that they are “not in a position to ‘run the show,’ (at an athletic event, practice, or otherwise) but to help coordinate the spiritual care and in many cases the psychological support” of athletes entrusted to their care (Fair & Warden, 2012).

◀ New England Patriots quarterback Tom Tebow (5) warms up for a joint practice with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Foxborough, Massachusetts, on Wednesday, August 14, 2013. (Daniel Wallace/Tampa Bay Times/MCT)



◀ Baltimore Ravens fans gather at M&T Stadium to celebrate the team's Super Bowl victory in Baltimore, Maryland, Tuesday, February 5, 2013. (Kim Hairston/Baltimore Sun/MCT)

**I**n The first responsibility of sport chaplains is all-inclusiveness. Opponents to the idea that sports and spirituality can and should merge—and that there are benefits to combining the two—make a fascinating critique, though: why so much talk of inclusion if sport is inherently exclusive? Here, critics fail to consider the needs of the people who give life to sport itself; instead, these critics focus solely on the nature of the game. It is true that “sports are inherently competitive” because in any game, there must be a winner and a loser (Maranise, 2013). However, there would be no game at all if there were no athletes to animate it, and these athletes, being human, need spiritual and emotional support from time to time. In order to ensure that no athlete is excluded from receiving the appropriate care they deserve, they must feel accepted and welcomed for who they are. While sport chaplains belong to different denominations, they are only permitted to discuss, preach, counsel, and teach their faiths with athletes who share the same faiths. However, they ought to be “not afraid to engage even with players who are atheist or agnostic” (Johnson, 2008).

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**2** Performing a successful “balancing act” is the second key responsibility of sport chaplains. At any time, the chaplain must be able to switch back and forth between using their academic training (for purposes of explanation, counseling, or spiritual assessment) and clerical responsibilities. The academic body of knowledge often covered by sport chaplains will naturally include their chaplain training, but generally also include a thorough knowledge of some field within religious studies, be it theology, ministry, comparative religion, biblical studies, or even spirituality. Within these studies, typically, the sport chaplain will focus on an emerging academic field known as “sport spirituality.” The study, integration, comprehension, and application of sport spirituality is vital to the success of the sport chaplain’s ministry, as well as his work with athletes. Sport spirituality, as an academic pursuit, has a variety of course descriptions; however, one seems to have become widely accepted within literature on the subject. Mazza (2008) states that “a spirituality of sport tends to form athletes in a sensitivity towards what is of real and endless value, namely the recognition of ‘the divine’ in sport, gratitude to ‘the divine,’ and the building of solidarity and fraternity.” Without question, athletes cannot be athletes forever. Eventually, age or infirmity weakens all. Through an academic study and careful application of sport spirituality, chaplains can convey the “everlasting value” of sports participation to athletes that will reach far beyond their active sporting careers. In this way, “sport unites people in a common goal” and becomes a sort of “school of life,” teaching athletes by experience a plethora of what is termed socio-spiritual growth opportunities (Clemens, 2012). For example, when athletes face disappointing losses, they internalize the errors that led to those losses, be they their own errors or the whole team’s. From that in-

ternalization, athletes must learn a means to correct those errors. This process of “skill improvement” teaches athletes something valuable relating to skills used in social life: When faced with a difficult loss in life (such as a loved one), one must internalize the loss, regroup oneself, and move forward. There are numerous socio-spiritual growth opportunities present in sport (e.g., Parry, Robinson, Watson, & Nesti, 2007; Maranise, 2009; Clemens, 2012), which, if properly studied, taught, and utilized, allow chaplains to develop “a pro-educational stance and an ongoing spiritual cultivation” (Mazza, 2008). Within the balancing act of the sport chaplain is also the non-academic “other side” to their work: their clerical or ministerial responsibilities. In 2008, Johnson described the clerical aspects of sport chaplaincy, highlighting the need for the chaplain to be ever-ready and always “available for pastoral care—baptisms, wedding preparations, deaths—even leading the study of sacred texts.” This ministerial role of the sport chaplain is perhaps the most commonly played, as it includes being a spiritual counselor and advisor. It is vital to remember that the competitions viewed yearly by so many of us in America—whether on TV, in person, or practiced in our own lives, “magnifies only a corner of the sports world; there is also real life” (Carter, 1996). That said, athletes inevitably face the same struggles in life as every other person, and these struggles require the assistance of a lay minister or clergy person. Sport chaplains provide this valuable service.

► Michael Jordan and his former wife Juanita meet with the press during a conference, Wednesday, at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois. After 13 seasons with the Chicago Bulls, six NBA Championships, 10 scoring titles and five MVP awards, Jordan, 35, announced he would retire from the game of basketball. (Nuccio Dinuzzo/Chicago Tribune/MCT)



**3** Cultivating relationships with athletes is paramount if a sport chaplain wishes to be successful. This is the sport chaplain’s third primary responsibility. What makes these relationships special is that the sport chaplain must, at all times, be trustworthy, non-judgmental, and able to keep conversations confidential. Nagy & Axner argue that “in a climate of trust, people are a whole lot more likely to tell you what is on their mind” (2013). In that same vein, when athletes seek spiritual counsel from chaplains, they may often be seeking guidance related to deeply personal matters of faith, such as sins of which they may feel ashamed. In such instances, athletes need to know that the chaplains will not judge them, nor will their private consultations be disclosed. This area of sport chaplaincy has raised many eyebrows in the academic communities regarding whether or not chaplains should be able to administer counseling should they not possess licensure for professional or pastoral counseling. Despite these concerns, an important distinction must be made between legal confidentiality in counseling, such as conversations in which one might engage with a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) or a psychologist, and privileged communication. Confidentiality may be best described as an ethical decision not to reveal what is learned in the context of a professional relationship without the consent of the counselee, unless statements made during a session indicate a credible threat to the safety of others (Fair &

Warden, 2012). On the other hand, privileged communication “is the same as confidentiality but is codified in law” (Levicoff, 1991). He elaborates: “Under a privileged communication statute, a minister [or chaplain] acting in his professional capacity as a spiritual advisor cannot be forced to reveal the content of confidential communications to any outside party, including a court of law.” Having the assurance of privileged communication would undoubtedly provide an athlete seeking the assistance of a chaplain with the sense of a more significant “climate of trust,” thereby allowing the athlete to feel more comfortable discussing vulnerable issues with the sport chaplain. Here is a final word pertaining to this third responsibility of sport chaplains: While athletes are open to the idea that sport psychology can facilitate improvement in skill-performance, many athletes are more likely to seek the help of chaplains in matters relating to such improvements. For their spiritual, emotional, and existential needs, “athletes also place tremendous trust in their chaplains” (Waller et al, 2008). In chaplains, athletes find those who are simultaneously “readily approachable and totally trustworthy” (Moore, 2007). These aforementioned arguments illustrate “that sport chaplains may serve as spiritual leaders, counselors, mentors or any combination of the three” (Dzikus et al, 2012) and can be most successful in those functions by cultivating a “climate of trust” with the athletes who seek their pastoral care.



**4** Fourth in the list of key responsibilities for sport chaplains is never to proselytize or to inform athletes how to think or feel, but to guide them to make such discoveries on their own. Through encouraging introspection, the sport chaplain becomes merely a guide to help athletes “navigate” the significance of their own thoughts and feelings as they pertain to their personal and professional lives. This responsibility is certainly critical in the role of a sport chaplain because, as previously mentioned, sport is a human activity (Mazza, 2008). That is, it is never played in a vacuum. Sporting activities—even “individual sports” like golf, wrestling, swimming, or weight-training—are collective. Though the individual competes on his or her own, they also have opponents, teammates, families, and friends who support their efforts, and of course spectators who continually comment on their performances. Part of a chaplain’s responsibility is to help athletes recognize that their participation in sport is always part of a larger whole, and that this matters over individual success (Kerrigan, 2008). This responsibility is vital since it prepares athletes to contribute to society, rather than to merely entertain. In this way, chaplains reveal to athletes how their sports participation is part of a much bigger picture.

**5** Common to all chaplains, regardless of specialization, is the ever-pervasive awareness of one’s “mission-mindedness.” That is, the fact that chaplains serve at the request and needs of others. Johnson explains that “none of us [chaplains] are paid by the teams” being served, but rather are “on staff” through chaplain organizations (like FCA, AIA and CAC) and are “attached” to a particular team that requests their services (2008). That said, sport chaplains “are responsible for developing their own funding base,” not through the teams or academic institutions they serve—such that they are able to meet the general costs of living (FCA, 2009). Fundraising is important to the non-profit and mission-minded nature of a chaplain’s work. Though it is true that most sport chaplains often travel with their teams for free and by invitation from coaching staff and are offered other perks for their work as “support staff,” like free meals and team apparel, chaplains must never neglect their mission of service to all athletes in need (even if they belong to an opposing team), nor must chaplains develop any attitudes or expectations that might otherwise be deemed unethical. Although the different sport chaplaincy organizations all hold their chaplains to separate, yet carefully regulated and supervised standards of accountability and ethics, each team also “can establish limits on what a chaplain should be doing in association with the team” (Waller et al., 2008). These limits, standards of professionalization, and accountability reinforce the reality of a chaplain’s duties and responsibilities in service to others rather than for the benefit of the self. It can be argued that the results of a sport chaplain’s work and ministry is, in itself, its own form of payment and reward. Constantini argues that the work of the chaplain “is that of accompanying, orienting, coaching them [athletes, coaches, and spectators alike] in sacrifice, giving them hope, and helping them to constructively build their life project” (2008). For chaplains, knowing that they may have in some way positively contributed to the course of one of their athletes’ lives becomes not only the motivation to continue providing service, but also enriches their own lives. While it is of great importance that chaplains do not neglect their mission and service, it is equally important that they not allow themselves to become “enslaved” to any athletes, coaches, or staff members. Chaplains may voluntarily assist other support staff members, such as managers or equipment distributors. Despite their commitment to serving others, however, sport chaplains must remember that they provide a service, and not a right. If their service is being abused by any athletes, coaches, or others, then chaplains ought to declare this to their organizational authority as well as with head coaches so that the issue might be resolved. Service must at all times remain voluntary—both for the chaplain and those who seek, genuinely, the chaplain’s assistance.



**6** The final, albeit not the least important, of the six major responsibilities of sport chaplains is a clearly defined understanding of limitations. Chaplains are “not in a position to ‘run the show’” (Fair & Warden, 2012). In the context of sport, this means that chaplains shouldn’t insert their own coaching insights or opinions on player-performance, but should simply maintain a strong, steady, and resolute presence. While it may seem that chaplains should fade into the background until called upon, the exact opposite is true. The presence of the chaplain at all, or many, of the team’s events (practices, banquets, or games) “will create an identity among the coaches and the players” (FCA Chaplain Training, 2013). Once the chaplain has established a certain, reliable, trustworthy, and credible identity with the team, they can be present without always being visible. In other words, team members and coaching staff will see that they have a resource at their service, should the need arise. Finally, a chaplain ought to be active in service and ministry even when not being called upon by an individual athlete or coach.

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It is imperative that further research be done in this sorely neglected field. To date, there have been some works written specifically about the vitality and usefulness of sport chaplaincy (cf. Dzikus, Waller, & Hardin, 2011; Waller, Dzikus, & Hardin, 2008, 2010). Given the rapid rate of growth in both professional and volunteer sport chaplaincy, and the formation of their organizations, more research and written literature is needed. As previously discussed, the realm of sport provides numerous opportunities to bring Americans together for a common cause. This togetherness through sport participation has become a worldwide phenomenon, but in the United States in particular, participating in sports has become the norm. In an age where the traditional way of life is threatened by acts of terror or natural disasters, maintaining normalcy in daily life is crucial to well-being. Because sport depends on athletes, who are human beings, it is fair to say that athletes require a sense of normalcy in daily life, too. This is how sport chaplains can contribute to the foundation of American life.

Consider this: if athletes were to become so overburdened that they couldn’t participate, then what would take the place of sports? Imagine if major sport organizations went on strike (or were punished for unethical behavior by sanctions, as they have been in the past). Already, the world of sports is in need of special attention as “the temptation to ‘win at all costs’ dominates sports.” This is evidenced by “the current scandals of athletes fixing results for gambling purposes, using steroids and other performance enhancing substances, and...the temptation to beyond commercialize sports so that athletes and spectators alike are seemingly reduced to commodities and exploited for financial gain” (Kerigan, 2008). Some of the aforementioned “scandals of athletes” can, if allowed to go unchecked, pose threats to homeland security through the promotion of underground or organized crime and/or drug trafficking and abuse. Sport chaplains could certainly be instrumental in resolving such concerns, as well in maintaining normalcy in American life. To that end, sport chaplains may serve a vital role in homeland security by acting as some of the “first of the first” responders to emergencies that may take place at athletic events. While such occurrences are rare, sport chaplains’ greater roles within homeland security would be the implementation and continual maintenance of “an ‘ethical mentality’ in sport that is capable of producing coherent acts and positive and virtuous dispositions” (Mazza, 2008). In this way, the sense of normalcy that sport provides to the American way of life would be protected. Americans would feel more safe, sound, and secure.



▲ Lance Armstrong is seen in undated file photograph. The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency erased 14 years of Lance Armstrong’s career on Friday, August 24, 2012, including his record seven Tour de France titles and banned him for life from the sport that made him a hero to millions of cancer survivors after concluding he used banned substances. (Montigny Philippe/Abaca Press/MCT)

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...sport chaplains may serve a vital role in homeland security by acting as some of the “first of the first” responders to emergencies that may take place at athletic events.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**ANTHONY MARANISE** has served as the Dean of Mission Identity and as a Sport Chaplain at Bishop Byrne High School, where he designed and implemented an academic course in “Sport Spirituality,” and as the founder and director of the Faith Development Program for Athletes at Christian Brothers High School in Memphis, Tennessee. He received his bachelors’ degree from Christian Brothers University, also in Memphis, in religion, philosophy, and psychology, with research specializations in sport and athletic behavior, and the syncretism of sport and religion. He is presently a researcher in both religion and sport psychology as a master’s candidate.