INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. Please fill in your particulars below. **Do not write your name.**

2. This test paper contains ONE question and comprises **ELEVEN** printed pages, excluding the cover page.

3. This is a CLOSED BOOK test.

4. Write your answer in this booklet.

5. Use a pen for this test. You are not allowed to use a pencil.

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**DO NOT TEAR OUT ANY PAGE FROM THIS BOOKLET**
This test assesses your ability to write an essay that expresses your view on a topic. Your essay will be assessed for its content, organisation and language:

- **Content:**
  - fulfillment of task
  - sophistication and sufficiency of ideas
  - analysis and use of information from the reading texts to support ideas

- **Organisation:**
  - clarity of overall structure
  - logical development of ideas

- **Language:**
  - accuracy – grammar, mechanics, cohesive devices
  - fluency – communicative quality, vocabulary use and register

**Notes and instructions**

1. Read Texts A and B carefully and write an **argumentative essay** of about 500-600 **words** in response to the following question.

   *In many societies, excellent sports persons are viewed as heroes in their society and are regarded as role models for youths. Other people are of the view that such sports figures should not be held up as role models. Which view do you agree with?*

2. Use information from the texts, your knowledge and experience to support your arguments.

3. Use page 6 to plan and organise your ideas for the essay.

4. Write your essay on pages 7-11. You are expected to acknowledge information taken from the reading texts.
Text A

Why do we make athletes role models?

It was an ugly week in the world of sports. Lance Armstrong, the all-American cancer survivor who set the record in cycling for winning seven Tour de France championships admitted in an Oprah Winfrey interview that he achieved his titles by doping. Manti Te’o, a nationwide icon for the courage he displayed in playing the day after his grandmother and girlfriend died, admitted that it was all a hoax. A National Football League player was arrested at an airport for trying to take a concealed weapon on a plane. The sports section reads much more like the crime beat section of a newspaper due to the drumbeat of off-field problems. This all raises the question as to whether it is appropriate to look to athletic figures as role models and whether they should be held up to circumspect levels of conduct.

Former National Basketball Association superstar and current television analyst Charles Barkley is clear that the answer is a resounding NO. He believes that athletes are not the figures that children should be emulating. He feels that it is parents who have the obligation and responsibility to be role models. He believes players have a duty to give peak performance on the court, and that is it.

The celebrity-making machine with its focus on interesting personalities brings these celebrities into our living rooms daily. Athletes often become figures of admiration and emulation in this sports obsessed society. Young people especially tend to look to athletes as models whether we wish them to or not. It is also this admiration that drives the sports entertainment industry. These athletes who play at a competitive level depend on public support; they compete for fan viewership, ticket sales and lucrative endorsement deals. If their fans become disillusioned by their behavior, these fans can easily turn their attention elsewhere. So, on a practical level being held up as heroes and icons is a financial necessity.

Beyond the dollars and cents, athletes should envision themselves as role models and responsible members of the communities that helped build and shape them. This does not assume they will at every moment be behaviorally correct; we all make mistakes and mature and grow from them. Nonetheless, there are several ways athletes can show their commitment to the community. For example, some well-known athletes have played their part and established scholarship funds or retrofitted athletic equipment or helped their church or Boys’ and Girls’ Club in the community they grew up in. A number of players have endowed scholarships at their colleges, setting an example for younger players and staying linked to that college community.

What all these athletes were modeling was their heart, initiative and the ability for all of us to improve our communities and tackle problems. So, when Heavyweight Boxing Champion Lennox Lewis said on a public service announcement that “Real Men Don’t Hit Women” he made a great contribution to young people’s perception of what is embodied in true
masculinity. Disaffected teenagers may tune out authority figures – parents, teachers, and commercial messages, but a superstar athlete can gain those teenagers’ attention to deliver a message of inspiration and hope.

Adapted from

Text B

Dangerous myth of the role model athlete

Way back in 2008, the three most admired personalities in sport were probably Tiger Woods, Lance Armstrong and Oscar Pistorius. They were portrayed not just as great athletes but as great men, role models: Woods was the ultimate professional, Armstrong had overcome cancer to rule cycling, and the double amputee Pistorius had become an outstanding sprinter. It later turned out that Woods was a serial adulterer, Armstrong a drugs cheat, and recently, in South Africa, Pistorius was charged with murdering his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp.

Any sentient person over the age of eight already knew that great athletes are not necessarily role models. That is not what the scandals have taught us. Rather, we can see now that the sports-industrial complex – the machine of media and advertising that cranks out myths about athletes – has gone into overdrive. As with investment banking it might be time to shrink it before it destroys society.

Like most modern industries, the sports-industrial complex arose in the United States. Its operatives understood that if people viewed great athletes merely as ordinary humans with one unusual gift, hardly anyone would bother following sport. So, drawing on a myth it was proclaimed that sportsmen possessed special moral characteristics. Athletes were tenacious, they sacrificed; they “took one for the team”. The sports-industrial complex was already pumping out stories about American athletes who loved their mamas and drank the right soft drink while Europe’s best footballers were still taking the tram to work.

From the early 1990s, satellite TV and then the internet promoted sport globally, taking the sports-industrial complex with it. Its role models are now marketed worldwide. In interviews and commercials Armstrong fought cancer, Pistorius fought for the disabled, and Woods fought for the global consulting and outsourcing firm Accenture.

Male athletes have taken over roles once held by knights, saints and soldiers. They represent the masculine ideal (female athletes remain less saleable, unless very pretty). In today’s vast mythmaking enterprise, the athletes serve only as raw material to be transformed from humans into paragons. All the athletes need to do is parrot the myth. “My example can be an inspiration to those who, like me, have experienced and struggled with a physical problem,” writes Pistorius in his autobiography, Blade Runner. “This can also be true for others who have had to overcome obstacles of a different nature.” He was a role model for all humanity. Or so we thought.

There are now vacancies for role models to replace Woods, Armstrong, Pistorius, Te’o, and Ryan Giggs, the most admired man in English football’s Premier League until his
complicated sex life was revealed. Replacements will be found – and later will fall. Only the sports-industrial complex goes on forever.

Adapted from


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