Understanding Sports Hero as an Educational Perspective: Based on the Analysis of Sport Film ‘Rudy’

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Dichotomy
(Sports and PE Areas)

- Positive
- Negative
Success-oriented Society in Korea

**Economy and Society**
- Educational fever
- Miracle of economic development
- Praise for educational accomplishment by Barack Obama and Rania Al Abdulla

**Amateur & Professional Sports**
- No pain, No gain
- Problems on student-athletes’ right to academic study
- Athletes- Student? Student- Athletes?
Problems of Student-Athletes as Human Right Perspective

- Low Happiness Index
- High Risk of Physical Injuries
- High Anxiety of after Retirement
- Exposed to variety of Violence
- Physical Abuse from Coach or Teammates

- Parents’ belief: Un-attention to their athletes’ academic interest
- Students early participation in athletic teams: absence of basic academic knowledge
- Special admission in the university with irrelevance in school grades
Students’ Happiness Index

- Lowest among OECD Countries
- Heavy Academic Work
- High Success-oriented Society
- Less Participation in Sports and PE
Case of Figure Skating

As a Means of School Advertisement?  Class participation?
Concept of Sports Hero

- Players who demonstrate superior skills over a long period of time
- An athlete who makes a spectacular performance over a relatively short time span.
- Player who perform at a high level despite some particular disadvantage
- Athletes who became heroes because of their individual flair and charisma (Smith, 1973)

Stood for truth, faith, justice, the triumph of right, mother, home, friendship, loyalty, patriotism, the love of *alma mater*, duty, sacrifice, retribution, and strength of soul as well as body (Boyle, 1963)

Acts as a mirror of society and culture, symbolized by the social role of past and present (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1969)

**Sports Star**  
**Athletic Hero**  
**Event-making Hero**  
**Sports Hero**  
**Reinforcement Hero**
Difference between Sports Star and Sports Hero

- Handicapped Sprinter ‘Pistolius’
- Snow border ‘Hanna Teter’
- One-leg Wrestler ‘Anthony Robles’
- Brasil’s Marathoner ‘Rima’
It raise Questions

- Why does sports hero be required in modern society, especially in Korea?
- What is a criteria to characterize an athlete as a sports hero?
- Who are indeed sports heroes from past to present?
- How does sports heroes affect to school children?
- How can we find sports hero?
Characteristics of Sports Hero in Modern Society

- Public role model through a gentle and strong image
- Wide vision, perspective and constant effort to develop oneself
- Continuous maintenance as sports heroes ➔ having excellent performance ➔ effort on self-management that involves patience ➔ thus, the true meaning of how a sport hero is born is **very limited**.
- The importance of sports heroes is in a symbolic meaning ➔ a lot of influence and change in the society, and super-human role model is required in society
- Formed by the public ➔ the public expects from the hero and satisfy their vicarious pleasure.
- Sports heroes are based on social and cultural agreement. The public is giving the one as sports heroes, and sports heroes should comply with it.
Social Function of Sports Hero

Sports deliver social and cultural values, thus sports heroes perform essential function as a role model

① Social value of competition, achievement, cautious of injury, reflection of commercialism, strengthen these values and re-creation.
  (e.g. Lee Bong-Ju’s advertisement (In a tough marathon, mom’s voice gave a new strength and won, -> promote the ideas of loyalty and filial piety).

② Win the competition through hard training -> compensation effect --> monetary reward and rising social status.
  (e.g. Mike Tyson, Whang Young-Jo, Park Chan-Ho, Park Se-Ri etc. --> they made us believe that whoever you are as long as you exert effort, you will succeed.

③ Overcome hardships through effort - > exist to protect the beliefs in sports hero
  (e.g. Joe Louis ‘Worship God and , do your best and train hard. Cherish honor more than money’, Emerged as a hero of the black community).

Thus, sports Star’s beliefs are presented as necessary for a successful social life beliefs to the general public.

And, sports heroes to the public norm, cultural heritage and values are passed by accepting the attitudes and beliefs contributed to the public needs.
Examples of Sports Heroes

(Heroes of the Nation+ Heroes of Humanity)

• Athletes who are remembered by the public went through channels of re-evaluation throughout the history.
• e.g. Jackie Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan, Vikila Abebe, Lans Armstrong, etc.
Who are Korean Sports Heroes

named by KAHPERD?

- Uhm Bok-Dong winning the 1913 Korea Motorcycle tournament
- Sohn Ki-Jeong won the marathon in Berlin Olympics 1936
- Kim Ki-Soo won the first professional World boxing championship in 1966
- Korea’s first woman to win 1973 World Table Tennis Championships
- Hong Su-Hwan won the World Championship on 1974
- Yang Jeong-Mo won the first Olympic gold medal after the 1976 independence
- South Korea’s Cha Beom-Geun first entered the German Bundesliga in 1970
- Choi Yoon-Hwe won the 1982 Asian Games swimming Triple Crown
- Hwang Yeong-Jo obtained the gold medal in 1992 Barcelona Olympics
- Park Chan-Ho entered the MLB as a first korean player on 1990
- Park Se-Ri won the LPGA in 1990
- The male soccer team advance to the semi finals on 2002 World Cup
- In 2000 South Korea's Park Ji-sung's first entry into the English Premier League
- 2008 Korea's first Olympic gold medal in swimming acquired by Park Tae-Hwan 2010 acquisition
- Korea's first Olympic figure skating gold medal by Kim Yuna
Reality of Sport Heroes

• In modern society, sports heroes are constructed and destructed repeatedly to create a new model.

• Anti-heroes, False-hero portraited image by media and the public

• ex) Broadcast vendor is a business side wherein the most successful stars are made in order to advertise a product

• The emergence of sports hero-is describes by the values of the dominant social norms and the image of the society’s symbolic value.

• ⇒ Most athletes, regardless of personal ideas should comply and obey to the stereotype asked by the public and show an example of a morally and talented image.

• However, sports hero takes the one-sided pressure by the public and while refusing the traditional heroic qualities, protects the image on imitation or avoiding to be a model of a public anti-hero.
Adverse Effect of Sports Heroes

- The high income of sports stars is a major concern to the general public and frequently appear in the media.
- The purpose of professional athletes is the pursuit of economic gain and the evaluation based on the level of income.
  - ⇒ Chase for the reputation as a star or commercialization, promotes materialism.
  - ex) Samsung support for Park Se-Ri, sports heroes potential to dominate commercialism are consequences of the spreading materialism in the capitalist community.
  - ex) Effects of advertisement through Olympics- Provides the company’s logo or name.
  - ex) The media adds commercialization to Sports Hero, patriotism, commercialism, mix sensationalism thus creating an atmosphere of cultural industries.
  - ⇒ Promoting the value of materialism when bidding for the highest value of material rewards.
Analysis of Sports Film ‘Rudy’

• Storytelling
  
  Rudy grew in a large Catholic family consisting of 12 siblings. His only wish was to be a football player of the UND. His father thought that Rudy isn’t smart enough to go to college, thus he gave him a job in an iron manufacturing company. The truth is his grades are poor. After graduating from high school, Rudy worked in the iron manufacturing factory as what his father’s intention and was engaged to Sherry. But Rudy is still holding on to his dream.

  One day, due to an unexpected accident in the iron factory, Rudy’s close friend, Eddie, died. As soon as his friend’s death, Rudy made an important decision. He threw his father, teacher and fiancée’s wishes for his life and started a new life according to his will, and decided to catch up his dream. Rudy headed for UND at South Band, but he was rejected and went to a junior college near the university. He met Fortune, the stadium’s janitor, who sleeps secretly in the good warehouse and is living a tough life.

  Two years later, Rudy was accepted in UND, but it wasn’t all about that because it will be hard to join the football team for a small stunted man who is under 170 of height. Rudy’s strong passion and endless effort made it possible, and he was able to participate in practice games with the help of football coach. Because of Rudy’s sincerity and everlasting contribution, he earned his teammates praise but he still can’t participate in regular members of the games. At last! The coach agreed to let him play next season but a new head coach opposed to it. However, through his continuous efforts and tenacity, he was accepted by his teammates and coach and on the last game of the season, he was allowed to play. Rudy stays in the last 17 seconds of the game as a defensive player and when the game ended he was carried off the field on his teammates’ shoulders.
Rudy’s childhood was influenced by his father who is a big fan of the football team of Notre Dame University (NDU).
Since then, he dreamt of being one of the players of NDU.
“Don’t Pass, Run! Run! faster than your opponent!”
“Don’t rest, just run until the goal line!”
“Rudy, not everyone is meant to go to college”
“What is it today?”
“August 23rd”
“22 big ones!”
“You’re the only one who took me serious”
“My dad always said, having a dream is what makes life tolerable”
● Eddie’s trust and his willingness to show to his family that he can do it
● Rudy headed to NDU
“How long have you though about this decision?”
“For as long as I can remember.”
“Have you taken the proper steps, investigated the process?”
“Yes.”
“Becoming a priest isn’t a simple thing”
“You think I want to be a priest?”
“Don’t you?”
At first, he studied in a seminary college named ‘Holy Cross’ and if he gets excellent marks, he will go to UND.
“Hey kid! You’re not suppose to be here” said the janitor
“Hey, this place is really something else, huh?
Someday, I'm gonna come out of that tunnel and run onto this field!
I'm here to talk about playing football for Notre Dame.

Our walk-on tryout date was two weeks ago. Are you a student here?

No. I'm at Holy Cross. But I'm gonna be a student here.
“Coach Parseghian... anything I can do to help the team, you just let me know”

I’m Rudy
“I want to be your assistant.”
“I've got a fill crew”
“Couldn't you use somebody else? I mean, I’ll work for free.”
• At last, the long dream of Rudy on coming to the locker of the football players came true.
• “We're gonna get them on the run! We're gonna keep them on the run!
• Then we're gonna Go! Go! Go! Go! Go!
• We won't stop until we're across that goal line.”
• Months and seasons had passed but Rudy didn’t stop on dreaming.
• With his constant effort and hard work, he got accepted after failing for three times in UND!
• “Hey guys! My son is going to Notre Dame!”
He got to enjoy being in Notre Dame for a while
But he didn’t know how hard it is to enter the football team.
Rudy receives a lot of bruises and sores but the coach praises him for his hard work thus making some of his teammates angry at him.

"Your bullshit out there makes us look bad, so dial it down a notch. Everybody's sick and tired of hearing, "Put out more like Ruettiger."
Despite all the efforts and hard work, the coach said that Rudy cannot play in the last game.
And so, his teammates gave back their uniforms in exchange of letting Rudy play.
Rudy received his uniform after all the hard work and efforts.
• Though his father is satisfied on watching the UND football team in the television, he went to the university to see his son’s play.
• But he didn’t see Rudy in playground......
In the last 37 seconds, the coach is still busy on giving instructions to other players.

And in the last 24 seconds, they made Rudy play.
And they won the game!

“Since I was a child, I wanted to go in this university. Since I was a child, I always hear people say I can’t do this.

They are always talking whether I can do it or not.

I always listen to the negative. But I don’t want it now.”