

# A brief for Amateurism in Sports

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### Amateurism is essential.

Amateurism, in its basic meanings, is inherent in all organised sport. We can abolish certain rules of amateurism but other rules will spring up in their place. A society can recognise and promote professionalism in sport, and thereby remove some of the hypocrisy from the actions of the few experts at the highest levels of performance. But this cannot remove or reduce the problem of amateurism for the 99 per cent of athletes at the lower levels of performance. These cannot be shunted aside; they will always demand education, loyalty and endless vigilance in seeking conformance.

Amateurism is valid for all cultures and times. There are certain basic truths or concepts that define sports amateurism for all cultures and all institutions, just as there are certain truths that are eternally valid in such other areas of human affairs as economics, ecology, biomechanics, as well as social ethics. The basic truth is inexorable and unchanging, though its application may be over a wide range of possibilities.

Sports morality is an aspect of social morality. Hard as the International Olympic Committee has tried to separate sports amateurism from politics and inter-national conflict, the problems of sport are really in-

separable from the morality and values of society as a whole. Each nation and institution interprets sports amateurism in terms of its belief and practice of social values in general.

In the early Middle Ages, with their religious emphasis and lack of social organisation as between states or cities, organised sports were inevitably at a low level. There were no rules of sports conduct either on or off the field.

In 19th Century England, the aristocracy dominated all phases of life, including sport. Naturally sports amateurism was interpreted from their viewpoints, with their low estimates of those who worked for a living and their high valuation of honour in keeping agreements and rejecting foul play of all kinds as well as of the importance of leisure time and of sports "*for sport's sake*", for the fun of it. If material rewards resulted from winning, as they often did, this merely enhanced the fun; to work harder at sports so as to ensure greater material rewards would be dishonourable.

### Amateurism cannot be policed.

The rules of amateurism are largely unenforceable, unless we accept Big Brother and a computerised society. Conformance can be achieved only within a society whose beliefs, values, and practices are at a consistently high level. someone once said that the worth of a society,

an institution, or an individual can be judged by the degree of its free adherence to rules of social conduct that are unenforceable. Certainly this applies to sports amateurism.

#### Essentials of Amateurism.

The basic truths that underlie the amateur idea in sports include the following:

*1. The demands of sport as related to time-energy-commitment, are secondary to other aspirations: studies, vocation, social service, or any challenging pursuit in life. This tenet forces acceptance of a limitation on the daily time-energy-commitment that can be devoted to sport, even though this produces a limitation on performance.*

This first tenet is the crux of sports amateurism. It is this tenet that separates it from sports professionalism which accepts no such limitations. The word "amateurism" is derived from the Latin meaning "lover". But love of sport, even love of sport for sport's sake, is not proscribed from professional ranks. Human motives are complex and intermingled, never all this and none of that. In fact, a man committed without reservation to sport can love it in a way and to a degree that is not possible for the part-time participant.

Again, amateurs proclaim fair play on the field of compe-

tion, but they are not alone in this. Depending upon the sport and the attitudes of its spectators and competitors, professionals must also adhere to the rules of the game, even though "fairness" may not be a primary concern.

Though not generally recognized, this first tenet of amateurism is also the basis of sports organisation and administration. Each sports body or institution demands conformance to its own rules, and these rules establish certain limitations on who may compete, on their qualifications, and often, though indirectly, on the time-energy that members can devote to sport. This is as true of the National Federation of high schools as it is of the N.C.A.A. or the I.O.C. Such rules are intended to keep amateur sport in its proper and limited place within the overall purposes and functions of the organisation. This is the crux of amateurism, even though it is considered as merely the proper regulation of sport.

*2. Amateurism agrees and conforms with the prohibition of all material rewards and incentives for success in sport that induce competitors to break the rules and regulations of our first tenet. Among such incentives are money payments, job promotions, life pensions, or other highly valued recognitions.*

It should be noted that to break the first tenet of amateurism is likely to give a direct and unfair advantage. Greater

time-energy for preparation brings better performance. But a material reward in itself does not enable a man to run faster or make a higher percentage of baskets in foul-shooting. The first tenet is the primary end; this is but the means of ensuring that end.

*3. The third essential of sports amateurism is a sense of honour, personal integrity or pride in practising the agreements of amateurism, especially the off-the-field agreements, though recognising that these are largely unenforceable by those administering sports.*

Sports morality in our modern society. We have stated that the problems of sport are inseparable from those of society as a whole. Any society can place any degree of value on the tenets of amateurism. It is clearly evident that our modern society places a very low value on the points of view stated in these three tenets, not merely in sports, but in all walks of life. Private profit is a major and even primary goal in all professions. Honour in maintaining social codes is neither a respected nor extensively practised concept. There is little recognition that a limitation on human performance in all areas of life is not only inevitable but also desirable, if a vital balance of life is to be achieved.

That is to say, it is inevitable that in our Western cul-

ture, there should be general disinterest and non-conformance with even a low-level interpretation of the amateur code. Within such a situation, those administering amateur sports, such as the International Olympic Committee, can only hope in terms of some distant future society, can pass only make-do legislation, and expect only the semblance of enforcement and conformance.

Amateur sports in a future one world. But those who do believe in a better future for mankind, a future of ONE WORLD in all social affairs, including sports, will seek NOW to build the framework of that better ONE WORLD. Without such efforts NOW, without such a framework on which to pin our hopes and arouse our enthusiasms and energies, that better world will never come.

To the best of my knowledge, no serious or continuing effort as related to sports amateurism has ever been made. Its problems are too world-wide and all-sports wide and too intermingled with the ideologies of too many nations and institutions to be dealt with by such specialised experts as the International Olympic Committee or the Amateur Athletic Union or the N.C.A.A., or any such bodies in this country or abroad.

A continuing international commission or council should be convened, perhaps under UNESCO, though with the full co-opera-

tion of the various international bodies of sport. Council members should be knowledgeable in international law, in the processes of mediation and arbitration, as well as in the needs and problems of sport.

Such a commission should be clear that any social culture whose life moralities, as related to those of sport, are at a low level, will respect and conform to those of sport at an equally low level. But it should be equally clear that any better ONE WORLD can come into being only as the various phases of that world, such as sports, are upgraded.

The two processes develop together. Just as ONE WORLD OF AMATEUR SPORT is fully possible only within ONE WORLD OF MANKIND, so that ONE WORLD OF MANKIND can emerge only as there develops the many smaller one worlds the worlds of sport as well as those of science and education and religion and economics.



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