

## CORRESPONDENCE

(The Editor assumes no responsibility for this rubric)

### Amateurism and the FIFA

By Mr. Seeldrayers, Member of the I.O.C. and President of the International Federation of Football (Association)

My old Friend, Mr. Albert Mayer, the dynamic Member of the I.O.C. for Switzerland has been kind enough to credit me with the merit of drafting the definition of the amateur which is to be submitted to the F.I.F.A., at its next Congress in Lisbon in June 1956 (See our Bulletin No. 49, Ed.).

Allow me to point out that the decision to incorporate a definition qualifying amateurism in the Statutes of the F.I.F.A. was originally adopted on my suggestion, at the Congress of Helsinki presided by Mr. Jules Rimet.

Mr. O. Barassi, Sir Stanley Rous and Mr. K. Gassmann were assigned the task of drafting this project which was approved and adopted unanimously by the Executive Council of the F.I.F.A. at its Meeting held in Stockholm on November 18th 1954.

I also wish to explain that this definition codifies the Regulations adopted by the F.I.F.A. when ever since the eve of the Games of Amsterdam, the lawfulness of payment for broken time was recognized.

These Principles have been implicitly accredited by the formula qualifying the amateur status that has been sanctioned at the Olympic Session in Stockholm. Furthermore, the I.O.C. has recognized the legitimacy of this measure from the fact, that ever since the Games in Amsterdam, the majority of the teams competing in the Olympic Games in Berlin, London and Helsinki, were composed of athletes known to all the Members of the I.O.C. to receive payment for broken time.

The same measure was applied in the case of other sports.

My friend, Mr. Albert Mayer avers that there were "sham amateurs" competing in the Games at Helsinki. I beg him to allow me to make meaning perfectly clear on this point.

1. There have been no anomalies reported to have taken place, as Mr. Mayer says, in Helsinki, when "sham amateurs" were entered in the competition. If such occurrences had been reported, the organizers, to wit the Directive Powers of the F.I.F.A. would have taken immediate steps to deal with the delinquents.

2. It is however true that rumours have been spread by certain Members of the I.O.C. at the Olympic Session in Mexico (April 1953) alluding to the presence of "sham amateurs" in Helsinki. Unfortunately, in spite of the insistence of our colleague,

Mr. Eric von Frenckell backed by my urgent requests formulated at the Session in Athens regarding this matter, it averred itself impossible to signal to us either the name of a single sham amateur nor the name of the country submitting such competitors.

3. It would be presumptuous on my part to affirm that there were none of these for the simple reason that frauds are always possible in football as well as in any other form of sport.

4. According to the Olympic Rules, the F.I.F.A. is not responsible for countersigning and to voucher for the amateur status of the competitors taking part in the Olympic Tournaments. *This responsibility devolves on the National Olympic Committees.*

I hasten to add that in my opinion the task of these Committees will be made much easier by the F.I.F.A. adopting a definition clear and precise of amateurism.

5. To revert to the topic of the Helsinki Games, I would be glad to know what my friend, Mr. Albert Mayer means by "sham amateurs". This term cannot apply to receiving athletes payment for broken time because as I mentioned before, this refunding has been sanctioned by the I.O.C. in all the Olympic Meetings ever since and inclusive of the Games held in Amsterdam in 1928.

Nor can it refer to the athletes who for the last few years are being called "State athletes". The later are not paid for taking part in sport competitions consequently they fall within the olympic definition of amateur status, and this from the fact that they derive no material benefit by it. I can with impunity affirm this in view of the declaration made by our eminent President Mr. Avery Brundage, at the conclusion of his visit to the Eastern Countries, when he stated that the Russian athletes are fully qualified to compete in our Olympic Games (See Mr. Brundage's statement to this effect in our Publication No. 48 ; Ed.).

The outcome of this is that, the two finalists in the Helsinki Games, Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia produced respectively a team of 11 players equal if not superior to the best professionals of the world, and this without incurring the blame of using sham amateurism, their regime and formation being similar to the one applied to the Russian athletes.

I know that in quite a number of sets, one reckons that the State amateurs are placed

in such excellent conditions that it is impossible for amateurs belonging to other nations to compete against them. I do not propose to lengthen this article by seeking to ascertain if this opinion and affirmation are justified. What I do wish to maintain is that these athletes, who are incontestably privileged, are recognized as being amateurs according to the terms expressed in the Olympic Rules.

The above remarks circumscribe singularly the number of teams where sham amateurs could be found.

The Paris Session may throw light on this complex question of amateurism if I take into consideration the statement made by our President Mr. Avery Brundage when he said to the Delegates of the International Federations in Lausanne :

"We shall go into the question of state amateurism in Paris."

In conclusion, here is the measure I suggest in order to eliminate sham amateurs from participating in the Games.

At the onset of each different section of the Games Programme, a Delegation of the I.O.C. would receive in a solemn sitting, the President or the Delegate of each of the National Associations concerned. Each Delegate would in turn swear on his honour, that the athletes belonging to his Federation are true amateurs conformly to the terms contained in the Olympic Statutes. An oath sworn under such conditions would be worth more and call for infinitely more reflection on the part of the man who has engaged his pledge than the signature which is asked for these days, when one does not always attach to it the importance it should have.

*R. W. Seeldrayers.*

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According to custom, we have submitted the article of Mr. R. W. Seeldrayers to Mr. Albert Mayer who begs us to add the following remarks for publication :

### **Mr. Albert Mayer's reply**

I am gratified to note that in Paragraph 3 of his statement, my friend Mr. Seeldrayers, President of the F.I.F.A., allows that some frauds occurred in the football tournament in Helsinki. This admittance backs up appreciably our statement. Furthermore, Sir Stanley Rous, Member of the F.I.F.A. will certainly agree to supply his President with the list of these "PROS", as he happens to know a good few of them.

Moreover, it is one of the reasons why the F.I.F.A. decided to establish a new status of its own in order to qualify an amateur. I congratulate it for this while apologizing for attributing wrongly the drafting of this new formula to the President of the F.I.F.A. Big men do not take offence at such minor details.

If it is correct that the responsibility of the athletes qualifications incumbs foremost to the National Olympic Committees, the F.I.F.A. cannot remain aloof and take no interest in this important problem. It is doubtless with the intention of being able to control these qualifications that the F.I.F.A. has just charge the National Associations with the task to keep an official register recording the names of the Non-Amateurs and Professionals Players. *The F.I.F.A. reserves itself the free disposition of it.* Seine that our friend. Mr. Seeldrayers has just put forward a new proposal with a view of eliminating the "Sham Amateurs" (quoted from his own words) the meaning of this expression must be familiar to him and I may be excused from offering here further explanation of the term in question.

*Albert Mayer.*

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Dear Mr. Editor,

As usual I have read the I.O.C. Bulletin with great interest and would like to congratulate you on the improvements you have brought into it.

For fear of any of your readers misunderstanding a sentence in Michel Clare's interesting article "Athleticism, the Fundamental Sport" which in the English Text starts in line 35, page 19, (bulletin No. 49) I feel it will be in the best interests of the I.O.C. to point out and make quite clear that the City of Berlin was given the Games of 1936 by the I.O.C. in 1931 and that in 1933, the I.O.C. successfully resisted the desire of the "Third Reich" to organize our Games and even to appoint a Chairman of their own choice, instead of Dr. Lewald, a member of the I.O.C. recognized as Chairman by the I.O.C.

Yours truly,

*Aberdare,  
member of the I.O.C.  
for Great Britain.*