

# Russian raps Sports Rivalry

by *B.J. Cutler* (in the New-York Herald Tribune)

Moscow. — A first faint cry against overemphasis in sports to produce champions at any cost has been heard in the Soviet Union.

As it did in the United States a generation ago, the demand for de-emphasis came from college instructors more interested in teaching and the physical condition of the entire student body than in producing a few record-breakers.

The call came at a time when, after years of careful preparation, Russian athletes are sweeping the Winter Olympic Games at Cortina d'Ampezzo, and are expected to field a powerful team at the summer games in Melbourne, Australia.

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The newspaper "Komsomolskaya Pravda", the Communist youth organ, opened the sports-for-fun-versus-overemphasis argument with an article called "Is this the way to organize sports work?"

In recalling the deaths of three young geologists on a summer climbing expedition last year, the newspaper described the great failings in the organization of sports work at institutions of higher learning.

It featured a letter called "Versus Championomania" by a teacher at Chelyabinsk Pedagogical Institute, who said :

"Of late the steady systematic job of training physically well-developed, strong and sturdy men and women at the institutes

has been replaced by the training of individual champions and record holders.

"Is it not high time to make a strong line of demarcation between two kinds of work, physical training at schools and institutes, and the training of high-class sportsmen at sports schools and clubs?"

Another writer, a Russian master of sports in Iking and teacher at Saratov Electrical Machinery Technical College, said :

"There is too much ostentatious shop-window display in physical culture work, with some physical culture leaders more inclined to utter pompous phrases about the broad development of sports at ceremonies and jubilees without getting down to brass tacks in supervising the physical training of young Russian people."

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"We must also stop to think whether we are not giving too much attention to masters and champions to the detriment of ordinary beginners."

Whether this demand of what is known in the United States as "sanity in sports" will succeed here cannot be predicted.

Knowing the propaganda value of champion athletes in international competitions, the Soviet Union searches diligently for promising young stars. They are carefully nurtured in special sports schools and later as adults get all the necessary time off, to permit them to train for meets.