

## CONCERNING SCHOLARSHIPS IN U.S.A.

(See our *Bulletin No 65.*)

In our last issue of the Bulletin, we have quoted diverse opinions on the subject of the scholarships in U.S.A. – Edouard Seidler, correspondent of the well-known French Periodical *Sport and Life* (published in Paris, 10, Faubourg Montmartre, *Ed.*), who has just returned from a prolonged stay in the United States, has just voiced

his opinion which strikes us as worthy of interest. We have not enough space to reproduce herewith the whole of his article, but, thanks to the courteous permission of *Sport and Life* to whom we express our thanks, we are publishing herewith the following extracts :

'It is the High-School which sows the seed, the College reaps the harvest. It is hard to realize the extent of the effort put up by the Universities in order to secure the élite and the best athletes when the time for selection comes round.'

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'The Colleges Athletics Championships at Los Angeles, the baseball tournament in Kentucky or Indiana, the football matches opposing selected College teams in Pennsylvania or in South Carolina are mass sports meetings or Relays Carnivals. The principal Highschools are represented there by their agents or recruiting-sergeants. There are *natural recruiting agents*, the College coaches who are bound to universities by sentimental feelings or are moved sometimes by more materialistic motives. As well as these there are the professional recruiting advisers called the *scouts* from the Colleges who search the country on the look-out for prospective talent. There is also the anonymous but big mass formed by the *Associations of former pupils*. These offer the most important factor in the recruiting of athletes for the universities. True to their College' colours of their early twenties, the *old members* will go to any length in order to obtain the adhesion of a high-school star who will add credit to their beloved college. They are responsible for the first introduction of pseudo-amateurism in the Universities, often without the knowledge of the latter. Who can stop a fervent former student to act as the generous patron, taking under his wing and sponsoring a young athlete whose sporting career he wishes to encourage ? Most Universities have maintained their traditions through creating *Associations of old members*. These associations openly admit that their 'raison d'être' consists in 'facilitating the means of existence' of athletes who accept to play for their colleges. Every sportsman in the U.S.A. knows of *The Wild-Cat Club* at Kansas University, or of the *Trojan Club* of South California University, of the *Spartan Foundation* Michigan College and of dozens of other associations doing the same thing : recruiting. Among the numerous opinions expressed, herewith, is the statement made by Mrs. Mark Lukas, mother of Jerry Lukas, one of the six best High-School basket players of last year, who received the trifling offer of 150 *jobs* in various universities throughout the United States. "A scout, said Mrs. Lukas, guaranteed a 15,000 dollars per year employment to my husband, the mortgages on the house we bought would be repaid (integrally), Jerry's brother was also promised a scholarship at the same University. Jerry was promised a new car and could charge for his expenses etc.". As against all this generosity Jerry was asked to do one thing only : play basketball. All these privileges are, of course, of a strictly private nature. Officially, the

Universities are unaware of the methods used by their associations of old students. On the otherhand, the Colleges strive to attract their future champions by awarding them athletics scholarships and sometimes, awarding them *easily won degrees* or diplomas... !

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At this juncture, the author of this article quotes some cases of corruption, of the existence of highly commercialized basketball and football enterprises, flagrant abuse of athletics scholarships, cheating at exams, etc... quoting the name of the people denouncing these practices.

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It is not to be denied, that certain Universities have been better at resisting the temptation of practising this "recruiting of scouting system". Among those we find the old established traditional Universities of the East who pride themselves more on their reputation than on athletics scholarships offered to attract students who will ALSO be athletes, and not to sportsmen whose studies play a subordinate part in their University courses. We refer to the Universities of Yale, Harward, Princeton, and Columbia, in particular. Of course, athletics scholarships are not excluded from these institutions, one knows of the influence Yale has in swimming.

It cannot be denied that these Universities have been able to avoid abuses. Chicago University has gone a step further in her contempt for achievement based on athletic value only. It has simply decided to abolish her football team and therefore this College has ceased to be represented in University sports meetings.'

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On the otherhand, we must lay stress on the fact that the system of recruiting by scout does not apply equally to all the sports practised at the Universities. FOOTBALL and BASKETBALL are the two sports chiefly responsible for earning the reputation of pseudo-amateur to the American student ; a reputation which, in the majority of cases, is well deserved. A hasty way of generalizing has laid the blame on all sports including the one which enhanced most the reputation of the American student abroad, I mean athletics.

Now, as far as athletes are concerned, they are wrongly accused, as they are beyond all suspicion and MOST PURE among the students who are participating in competitive American sport. Of course, they enjoy the most favourable conditions in training, have modern stadia nearby their lecture halls, have the most competent coaches and have the precious leisure time put at their disposal

by the present American systems of education. These represent legitimate advantages enjoyed by all American students and not only by the elite in the world of sport. Of course, there are certain athletes who also benefit by athletic scholarships, these awards are far from covering all the expenses to be borne by the student in most cases, also from turning the athlete into a professional. This is easily explained : athletics are almost a regional sport. Unlike other forms of sports it is not a *paying* sport as it draws no receipt. It is rare to find that the Universities take an exceptional interest in athletics.'

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The author of this article relates a conversation that he had with Jesse Mortensen, the coach of the most reputed team in the world, that of the University of South California who formed Olympic champions or world recordsmen. After giving some information on the incredible task of scout recruiting practised by his colleagues working in the football and basketball sections, he let escape this naive remark which left his interviewer agape : 'Ah, if only we had the same privileges enjoyed by the Soviets in the field of athletics.'

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'America, as a rule, does not invest at a loss. This rule applies also to the Universities' sport system and to the industrial and commercial enterprises. Athletics are tolerated, as a sport it-receives the moral encouragement it needs and is provided with adequate means of existence. Once this sport is provided with an adequate number of stadia, trainers, coaches and masseurs, as well as sports equipment, it is refused further credit for the practice of recruiting or scouting. On the stock exchange of sports, the athlete represents less value than the basketball player, in his turn, the latter is worth less than the football player. Just as at Hollywood, only stars command a high salary. In the stadium, the footballer is a draw, an asset, a star, whereas the athlete is only a sportsman who failed to become a football player ! It is there that, at University level, sport joins in with the industry of paid shows. From now on, sport-business and show-business are to be considered close relations !'

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Further on, the author refers to the receipts which often reach astronomical figures, as they are collected at football matches and accessorially at basketball tournaments. These receipts form the main source of income of the sport centres at the large Universities. We

refrain from quoting the figures mentioned in that article, also from alluding to the passionate feelings raised in the United States by the king of sport : football. There, Americans forget their Anglo-Saxon temperament and closely resemble the Latins although they do show more discipline.

‘Faced by these outbursts of enthusiasm, overpowered by abuses of all kind for which the large Universities are responsible, one is on the look-out for a supreme authority, forcible and masterful which will have the power to keep in check this rousing surge of passion. Alas it is not to be found !’