

Extracts from

A SPEECH MADE BY THE MARQUESS OF EXETER

*the president of the Amateur Athletic Association of England,
at the Annual Meeting*

In the first place I feel that it is time that a statement was made on what is really the fundamental difference between amateurism and professionalism.

May I, at the outset, make it quite clear that it is nothing whatever to do with *sportsmanship*. You will find good *sportsmen* in the professional ranks as you do in those of amateurs. Also in the majority of the *Olympic* sports there is much personal goodwill between the two groups.

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL? A man quite honourably decides that sport shall be the trade which he is going to follow to earn his daily bread, in precisely the same way as another man may decide that his trade should be engineering, banking, insurance or any other job. Naturally whatever the profession that anyone decides to follow, he is going to do his best to become efficient at it, in order that he may earn as good a livelihood as possible. By the nature of things this must obviously be the over-riding consideration in sport for the professional. For instance when he is going through the toil and sweat and self-denial of hard training, surely his chief aim must be to maintain or improve his financial position, in the same way that a man in another job may attend evening classes so as to better himself. The professional also, of course, is deeply interested in the crowds which he can attract, for after all this is entertainment business, and on these crowds depend his pay packet and the comforts which he and his wife and family can enjoy. In addition, of course, there are the various sidelines to his job of sport, like advertising, with which he can supplement his income.

THE AMATEUR, on the other hand, is a man who decides to follow some other trade for getting his daily bread, whether it be as a shop assistant, in manufacturing or any other job, and who applies himself no doubt to his work as assiduously as does the professional to his sport, and with the same motive, namely to better himself and attain a higher position and receive a greater financial reward. He however takes part in his sport for very different reasons, and I am referring not only to the handful of champions, but also to the hundreds of thousands of ordinary men, who know in many cases that they will never be placed even in their Club events, yet get

immense pleasure out of it. I believe that they go through the labour and toil and self-denial of hard training to a considerable extent for the inner satisfaction that it gives them to be really fit and to have won in the struggle to be so. It is immaterial to them if one person or ten thousand come to see them perform, and they enjoy too the thrill of the competition and the good fellowship which they find in club life and in the company of others with the same ideas; and, of course, all this without any thought of financial reward or their livelihood depending on it. Furthermore, although probably no active athletes realize it until they get older, this type of amateur approach to competition and club life develops not only healthy and happy people, but also the characteristics which the community needs for good citizens. As administrators of sport, we must never lose sight of this fundamental fact.

One of the greatest gifts we have given to the world is this conception of amateurism, and they have paid us the very great compliment in many countries of setting it up as their goal too. Surely it is something which is infinitely worth-while. There have been odd cases of athletes cheating against their amateur rules, but this is a group which is despised, I believe, by amateurs and professionals alike.

The conclusion, therefore, that one cannot fail to come to, is that the difference between the professional and amateur athletes is one of *approach*. To the one the over-riding factor is that sport is the vehicle for earning his daily bread, with its consequential implications, and to the other it is a happy recreation, without material gain, and which, in the process, develops some finer sides of the individual's character.

As an example, it is because of this different *approach* that the International Olympic Committee lays it down that no one may serve on a National Olympic Committee who has been a professional at any sport. It feels that those who play any part in the government of Olympic sport must come from the ranks of those in whom this seed of the amateur approach was sown in their youth, and which has blossomed forth during their lives, giving them automatically the right reaction and slant on the problems and difficulties of leading and administering amateur sport.