

## Editorial

*Defeat holds a lesson the value of which is much underestimated.*

*The desire to win at all costs, the exaggerated prestige attached to victory sometimes makes defeat so cruel that the loser is overcome with disproportioned gloom.*

*I was reminded of this some weeks ago when watching the finals of a football tournament on television. The game was even until, halfway through the second half, one team scored a goal, then another, thus gaining the upper hand and a promise of winning. From that moment the other team gave up and resorted to defence tactics. The end of the game was played on the back foot, with the "humiliated" team contenting themselves with keeping the ball by ridiculous trickery until the referee's final whistle blew, putting an end to the protests of the frustrated spectators.*

*More recently the finals of a tennis tournament offered us the distressing spectacle of a player recognized to be among the best missing all his chances and the control of his strokes, together with his legendary smile, thus giving strength to his opponent just because, from the start, the man seemed to be on better form. If victory naturally escaped him in a match that soon became mediocre through being uneven, was it not above all because he wanted it too much, and in the wrong way ?*

*Examples of this fatal stiffening-up, of these bitter defeats are numerous. Is it not a sign that the "need to win" is inspired by other thoughts than that of "fighting well" ? Are not the prizes, the praise, even the material and social advantages heaped upon the winner, out of all pro-*

*portion with what he has done ? The element of luck — whose absence is so often evoked as an excuse for the failures of the current sporting hero and to soothe the wounded pride of his club or his countrymen — luck also plays a part in the outcome of a match.*

*Victory is the reward of a struggle, of sustained effort. It endorses the athlete's wish to be the best one day. It is a conclusion.*

*But defeat! As an additional test, it is educative. As evidence of certain shortcomings it becomes stimulating. It is the promise of new hopes, new struggles. If accepted, defeat sharpens the judgement, strengthens the will, teaches a new control which is more thorough because it has been more thoroughly tested.*

*Thus it is with the African athletes to whom this issue is dedicated : they were not afraid to meet the best in Tokyo and are preparing to reap the fruit of experience in their Regional Games.*

*Thus it is with the Frenchman Michel Jazy, who collapsed in the Olympic stadium because he had to win and who, once over the cruel disappointment, recovered completely later to beat his opponents of last October in masterly style. Thus it is with young Christine Caron, the swimmer, who recently succeeded in defeating her happier rival in Tokyo. And how many others are there...*

*This lesson applies in life, if one thinks of life as a projection of sport, with the difference that in life our successes are often achieved in other spheres than the ones that saw our failures.*

*To know how to lose is also to fight well.*

*To continue to fight is to know already one kind of victory.*

Editor.