

## "ATHLETES, DOPING AND OLYMPISM"

by  
Dr G. M. Oza

*In addressing "his best wishes to competitors of the XIXth Olympic Games and future Games", Dr. G. M. OZA, head of the General Department of Education at the University of Baroda (India), wrote an article describing the fight against the curse of "doping" undertaken by the Medical Commission of the I.O.C., giving his definition of the term "doping" and severely criticising drugs in the light of the Olympic ideal. Here are some of its main passages :*

### THREE GROUPS OF DOPING SUBSTANCES

The non-food substances which have an effect on normal ability either by their composition or their dosage are listed in to three groups by the Medical Commission. These are considered as dope even if used therapeutically. The groups are :

- a) Amphetamine, ephedrine and similar products
- b) Stimulant affecting the central nervous system such as strychnine, as well as analeptics and similar substances
- c) Analgesic narcotics such as morphine, methadine and similar substances.

### DEFINITION OF DOPING

*Well, then what is a dope ? It is a preparation of a drug, which forms habit, such as that of narcotics or of opium. Its use produces pleasure and stimulation. It is used also to deprive of sensibility. Before a race, dope is given to a horse to depress or stimulate it temporarily; this may spoil or improve the speed. The idea behind doping is to impregnate an organism with a foreign substance in order to obtain the desired appearance, performance, property etc. In popular terms, dopes are stimulating substances.*

In slang, dope is referred to as a harmful drug taken by a narcotic addict. In short, doping conquers fatigue due to physical and mental labours, for a certain period.

### ATTACK ON DOPING

I, for one, am of the opinion that dope should no longer serve as an encouragement to the sportsman. The greatest encouragement to an athlete is the Olympic motto: "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*". The meaning of these lucid Latin words is "Swifter, Higher, Stronger". It should help the runner to run faster, the jumper to jump higher and the thrower to throw more strongly. The chief thing a participant can hope for is to set his heart on a Gold Medal. One has to struggle, strive and sweat for success. The Gold Medal goes to only one out of all the best participants. The recognition given by the world of sport to the winner is unique. Then for the rest, the more important thing is to take part in the Olympic Games. For, the right of participants is to give the best of their 'fighting actions' and not to its fruits.

The Olympic rule for amateurism runs thus: "An amateur is one who participates and always has participated in sport solely for pleasure and for physical, mental or social benefits he derives therefrom, and to whom participation in sport is nothing *more* than recreation without material gain of any kind, direct or indirect." Dope never provides the real pleasure, recreation and mental and physical advantages in the long run. I believe, one has to win with one's own natural abilities. The doped condition of a person should disqualify him. The artificial aids, used to improve performances, are unnatural and contrary to the spirit of the Olympic Games. What the entire world expects from a participant is a success achieved through the natural performance of the human being. Real sportsmanship is always associated with natural potentialities. We wish for fair play to bring honours for the nation. Therefore, those who have the potential to make the final national team, go to the Olympic Games with the idea of bringing out their best skills and displaying their physical strength. If a doped athlete bags the Gold Medal, I would call it 'the drug grabbing the Gold Medal'. The best glory for a man is to win the event with his own efforts. This heritage will be the best heritage the present generation can leave behind, I hope.

The oath is taken to obey the rules - which ultimately goes a long way towards fulfilling the ideals of sportsmanship. To us sport should mean fair play, recreation and good sportsmanship. Once we have this with us, satisfaction and pleasure would always accompany us. Competition brings joy. Contestants meet with good will for the test of strength but, it is peaceful.

In the history of modern medicine, scientists and research workers have discovered modern drugs. Their noble aim is to provide people of the world with excellent health and longer life. The new medicines are designed to combat diseases and to improve their effectiveness; in other words to bring about happiness. Is this not a significant advance in science's fight against diseases? The efforts of scientists have met with considerable success for the alleviation of human sufferings, but this is not an end to our problems. I am writing this for the benefit of the entire athletic world. Perhaps they may not be conscious of the mode of action of dope. It also includes poisonous drugs. Even under expert medical attention, excessive use of dope may lead to disastrous results. We may not realise the effects of these drugs at the moment. Surely they upset the natural systems of our bodies. In fact dope may not be beneficial to human life; it may do us more harm. A doped athlete may have a high degree of uncertainty: drugs dull the mind and senses. A severe narcotic effect may slow down the general responses of an athlete. Drugs may deprive the athletes of their natural feelings and actions; they may lead their life in a confused state; it may not be a dynamic life. They may become lazy and indifferent towards leading the life of a sportsman. They may lose their natural smartness and intelligence. I do not forecast these remarks as disadvantages associated with the excessive use of drugs in sports but some day I may be proved right.

I would prefer to class the athletes as a 'better race' on the surface of the earth. The future generations would inherit their characters and therefore a continuity of good human society would be maintained. I would never wish then,

that we should be deprived of such fine, healthy persons as a result of doping. Even if the history of doping dates back to the beginning of human civilization, I feel that it is not in keeping with the Olympic ideals and with the present time. The 20th century is for co-operation and not for unfair competition. The Olympic symbol is for developing sporting friendship between the different civilizations of the world.

Dr. G. M. OZA

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