

The Olympic Ideal faces extinction

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The problems of the curse of "doping" were voiced by the author in 1969 in the "Newsletter" (No. 19, April 1969, p. 209-212) of the I.O.C. The present article is a continuation for the readers of the "Olympic Review".

E/ Very often, people debate on the use of drugs in sport as a blessing or a curse. The basic question before the sporting world is whether the sportsmen should really resort to drugs. In fact, Olympism hates the use of drugs in sport. The Medical Commission of the I.O.C. has already undertaken to fight against the curse of "doping". Therefore, in general there should be no room for it in sport.

Those who support this idea rightly deserve thanks from the society for creating a wave of protest the world over against the use of drugs in sport. For, in the long run, drugs act as evils for our beloved sportsmen!

It is most likely that we may not realise at the moment the effects of drugs on human physiology. As such, the innocents consider it a blessing and go after such 'wonder drugs' which may enable them to have undeserved brilliant successes on the field. Off the field, however, this does not merit recognition as a virtual and rightful victory; it is merely contrary to the ethics of the sporting spirit of Olympism.

Medicine is meant for the alleviation of human sufferings. An athlete is above the stresses, strains and failures of everyday life. To overcome these hardships he should under no circumstance opt for drugs. An athlete's natural build-up is enough to keep him or her sufficiently healthy and vigorous for achieving glory on the field of sports.

One can always improve performances by sweating on the field, sincerity, will and devotion to the game. Pharmaceutical aids should not gear up the athlete for sporting competitions. The very use of drugs leads sportsmen towards fatigue but without them they may lose their confidence to make the first grade. In other words, pharmaceutical psychology would always dominate them to such an extent that they would be controlled by a chemical kit during their life span.

The best thing for a popular sportsman is not to have too many appearances in practically all the competitions by relying on medicine. They just go on complaining of tiredness and ultimately become victims of unnecessary drugs. It is better to die a natural death and end life in a characteristic sporting manner than to collapse after having become a drug addict.

The "doping" substances to which I refer here belong to the three groups as listed by the Medical Commission of the I.O.C. Since the Olympic Rules are violated very often, I dare to declare that the survival of an entire generation of promising athletes is at stake. Hence, we must work together to make them understand their virtual responsibilities and at the same time save them from the worst use of drugs - in sport. Under the circumstances, can anyone safely predict the fate of the Olympic ideal? The authorities of the I.O.C. will never terminate their fight against drugs successfully unless the Olympians co-operate with them. Thus, unwisely and selfishly, if our worthy athletes neglect the Olympic principles, we shall very quickly destroy the existence of the Games.

The hazard of "doping" has attracted a considerable amount of attention in recent times. One school considers it a blessing and another a curse leading to dreadful and disastrous repercussions. However, almost all concerned with the subject agree that "doping" is a health hazard. Although the athletes are aware of the reports on the dangers of "doping", the practice or frequent indulgence in it is on the increase practically all over the globe. The sportsmen go after all the available products on the world markets and thereby help the pharmaceutical industry to grow vigorously.

The Olympic ideal seems to be losing the fight for survival. The ideal, one of the noblest in the world, is threatened with extinction with the memory of many people living today. I appeal to the legion of Olympic lovers residing throughout the world to do their utmost to preserve the dignity of the Olympic Games.

We have pledged to have an anti-doping crusade with a view to safeguarding the moral and physical health of our athletes. This is the only measure which will protect 'strength health and purity' - the aims of sport.



G.O.