



We print below the address given by Her Royal Highness The Princess Anne at the official opening of the conference, in her capacity as patron.

Subsequent to Her Highness's address is a lecture on the competitor's viewpoint of certain problems affecting sportswomen as presented by Jose Poelmans, former leading international hockey player on the Dutch national team from 1966 to 1976.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Amazonian image of the sportswoman has been hard to lose. For a long time this stock figure has been an easy target for jokes. Allied with an unflattering misrepresentation has been the negative assumption that the achievements of sportswomen do not really count anyway.

I am sure that there have been many occasions when the success gained by women in a particular event was considered of lesser value than that of a man in the sport. Obviously physical factors must mean that a woman's achievement will be of a different order - she does not have the strength, for example, to run as fast as a man. But too often this difference has been considered to imply a lesser achievement.

I am fortunate in that in my own sport, women compete on equal terms with men. However, there are now signs that the successes women are enjoying in so many sports are at last receiving recognition.

This conference, organised by the Central Council of Physical Recreation is about women, their ideals, their aspirations, their competitive achievements, their devotion to their chosen sport, but above all their right to be considered equal competitors except in that very narrow field where strength and explosive power are the essential qualities.

I am sure we will learn much from the discussions and debates that will take place and I am certain that this conference will be a step forward in achieving further recognition for women's sport.

ANNE



*H.R.H. Princess Anne on her mount Goodwill in 1976.*