

Amateurism: An idea of the past or a necessity for the future?

Robert J. Paddick*

On May 18, 1913 Maurice Millioud, professor of philosophy at the University of Lausanne said, introducing his evaluation of the 1913 Olympic Congress,

We should not ask ourselves what sports are. We should rather ask ourselves what we want them to be. They are what they are; we need not create them but regulate them.¹

In making this distinction he reminded his audience that sport, like all social practices or institutions, is the product of someone's decisions and may, therefore, be assessed in terms of purposes and interests and desires. It is also open to the possibility of both intentional and incidental change. In speaking thus he was heralding some practical theory.

This paper is offered as a contribution to the practical theory of athletics. A practical theory, in contrast to an empirical theory, prescribes and justifies; an empirical theory describes and explains. In so far as a practical theory specifies what ought to be done in the light of reasons, it necessarily involves value judgements and is thereby 'essentially contestable.'² This does not mean, though, as many seem to think, that such recommendations are, thereby, mere opinion, mere taste. Value judgements may be sound or unsound and may be analysed and debated in the quest to find out what is worth accepting.

In the rational regulation of athletics, establishing the justified prescriptions is of course only the first, albeit necessary, step. Implementation of what is desirable requires knowledge of, and influence over, the sources of power and the causal mechanisms which operate in the actual institution of athletics. Consideration of these matters is not explicitly within the scope of this paper but some implications of specifying what is desirable bear closely on questions of implementation. Basically the function of the practical theory, then, is to establish what are the finest things which have emerged from the tradition of Olympic athletics and how they might be protected and promoted. In the absence of such a guiding theory, the development of athletics is left at the mercy of diverse forces serving a variety of purposes, with the result that much that is valuable may be lost. It is of course, possible that attempts to establish what should be preserved will fail, but given the history of athletics this seems unlikely.

* Robert J. Paddick is professor of physical education, Flinders University, Adelaide. Australia.

One does not have to search far to find expressions of the need to provide such a theory. For example Lenk,³ in numerous works, calls for a philosophy of achievement in athletics. Such a philosophy would prescribe under what conditions achievement is desirable. It would defend certain practices and proscribe others. It may reveal that it is not so much the achievement that we applaud but the effort required for a human being to produce it.⁴ The same performance achieved by an android would not merit applause at all, except perhaps for the inventor. Further, in the context of Olympism, which has been the most commonly used practical theory, Nissiotis,⁵ among others, has noted the need for a re-examination of the philosophical presuppositions of sports which risk domination by economic and political power and cheating. His call, like many, has been in recognition of the obvious discrepancy between the theory of sport and its practice. Czula⁶ is another who has argued strongly for a re-evaluation of the Olympic philosophy as the dominant practical theory governing international athletics. He refers to similar views from a number of former athletes, historians, coaches, commentators and educators. Clearly the theory has not had a prevailing influence over the development of modern sport. Olympism has been retained, it seems, only as its rhetoric, its symbols, and its rituals, and this has been seen by many writers as creating hypocrisy.⁷

Foremost among the casualties in Olympism has been the concept of amateurism which de Coubertin regarded as central to his pedagogy of sport. The history of international sport could be told as a relentless onslaught on the philosophy of amateurism and the gradual erosion of the attempts to enforce it. Whether this consistent trend was due to the inexorable tendency of athletics to professionalism,⁸ or "the value system of the so-called industrial and achievement oriented society"⁹ or the conflict, inherent in Olympism, between the pursuit of excellence and an avocation, Strenk concludes "that as a code of conduct and as a philosophical concept amateurism was a failure."¹⁰

In speaking thus, however, he draws attention to the important distinction between the code of conduct and the underlying idea. If the code of conduct is considered as a set of rules designed to restrict behaviour to that which accords with the underlying idea, failure to achieve the desired purpose may be due either to faults in the implementation, or faults in the underlying idea. If, then as Brundage often reminded his critics, amateurism is 'a matter of the spirit', it would not be surprising if attempts to enforce it by rules governing behaviour "encouraged hypocrisy, dishonesty, and corruption."¹¹ This would be particularly so if the underlying idea was never clearly articulated.

A further distinction suggests even more strongly why the code of ethics might not have been successful. We can distinguish between a code that is imposed on athletes from outside and one that develops from within, as an expression of the athletes' conception of what they are doing. A self-imposed code of ethics based on a shared conception of mutual dependence would avoid the difficulties which have arisen with an externally imposed code based on purposes neither widely understood nor shared.

In this paper it is accepted, in agreement with Strenk, that the code of conduct has been a failure, but it is argued that the same cannot legitimately be claimed for the

underlying idea. A consideration of the nature of the athletic endeavour reveals a much more central role for amateurism than is apparent when it is interpreted in terms of money, or time, or social class, or merely as an element of de Coubertin's pedagogy of sport. Amateurism is essential to the pursuit of excellence and is the source of those values which make athletics worthwhile. As such it must have an important place in the practical theory which regulates athletics. So while the code of conduct may well be discarded as an incompetent attempt to implement an idea, it is argued here that the idea is essential, even though certain interpretations of it, and certain arguments for it have tended to obscure rather than illuminate its significance.

So, when Strenk, says,

Hopefully the day is no longer far off when athletes, regardless of their occupation or career, income level or birthright will be able to compete in the Olympic Games, and the Games will truly be a place for the world's greatest athletes to measure themselves against worthy opponents,¹²

he may well be heralding the demise of the amateur code of conduct, but not, thereby, as he seems to believe, the death of amateurism. That would be a more serious loss.

Debates about the desirability and undesirability of amateurism, and the need to exclude or include the professional, have been conducted in many different terms, all interrelated, but each more or less useful for some particular social purpose. Glader¹³ in his study of amateurism, distinguishes three meanings according to purposes which he calls the social distinction, the special advantage distinction and the motivational distinction. Young¹⁴ in his penetrating study of the history of the notion of the amateur athlete, identifies a slightly different group of three meanings, centred on money, time, and social class. Strenk¹⁵ draws attention to a wider, moral component and in his catalogue of incidents includes cases of misbehaviour by athletes.

To bring some logical order to this variety of senses of amateurism, the distinction between an activity done for its own sake and an activity done for some further purposes, is useful.¹⁶ This distinction corresponds to Glader's motivational distinction, and is a primary among the various meanings, in the sense that they can all be explained as interpretations of it, in particular social contexts. In focussing attention on an activity done for its own sake, that is as an end, amateurism is the having of certain kinds of reasons for action. The reasons are all contained within the activity; there are no further reasons. Another way to express the same idea is to say that it is done for enjoyment, or it might be called 'play'.¹⁷ Another name for amateurism is disinterestedness. Amateurism, in this sense, refers to a relationship between a person and an activity, and it is a relation that cannot be observed directly.

This idea of amateurism needs to be developed more fully later, and its importance has to be established, but, if for the moment, it is accepted that it is basically a matter of motive or attitude or spirit, then it is not surprising that difficulties arise when an attempt is made to regulate it with rules. Behaviour can be rule-governed, but not motives. The opportunity for hypocrisy is created in the gap between motives and whatever behaviour is chosen as the relevant focus of the rules. The assumptions which are necessary to bridge this gap often seem to be questionable, with the result that the behavioural interpretation of the underlying idea

is spurious. The various interpretations have been in terms of money (paid or unpaid), time (full-time or part-time), social class (upper or lower) and morality.

Most of the debate about amateurism has been about money; it was held that anyone receiving money in connection with their sport could not be an amateur. The most sweeping rejection of money went far beyond the relatively simple matter of forbidding direct payment for participation in sport. The connection between sport and money, at various times and to different degrees by different sports, has been taken to include every kind of link from that displayed by the most blatantly materialistic professional through to the tenuous association in the case of a poor innocent amateur competing, even unknowingly, against a professional. Under the most severe interpretation, no distinction was made between money as wages, money as prizes, money for advertising or for endorsement, money in the form of expensive gifts, money as wages from related occupations, or money for legitimate expenses. For a period, not only current money was deemed to be relevant, but also money in the past, and even in the future: intending to become a professional athlete some time after the Olympic contest was unacceptable.

The basic assumption in this monetary interpretation of amateurism is that money destroys disinterestedness; the athlete who receives money for sporting performance must be doing it for the money. This is clearly unreasonable. When people are paid for a service it does not follow that they did it for the money. Some people are lucky enough to be paid for things they like to do and would have done anyway. Accordingly, as Messenesi,¹⁸ for one, has pointed out, it is quite possible for the professional (in the sense of paid) athlete to compete with the amateur spirit. Extending the proscription beyond direct payment to exclude all the many other ways, direct and indirect, in which the athlete may be related to money, involves a number of other questionable assumptions. Why should it be assumed that an athlete's disinterestedness will be destroyed by association with a professional? Why should it be assumed that an athlete transfers a professional attitude from one activity to all other activities, or from the past to the present, or that an intention to earn money from sport in the distant future, perhaps as a coach, destroys disinterestedness in participation now? In short, to interpret amateurism in terms of money is to rely on a tenuous set of assumptions.

Not unrelated to the financial interpretations, is the interpretation of amateurism in terms of time. Here the context is provided by ideas such as avocation, recreation, and part-time as opposed to full-time involvement. Basically the distinction between 'done for its own sake' and 'one for some further purpose' is interpreted as the distinction between recreation and work. Further, because sport was seen as essentially non-productive it could not thereby be a form of work. A supporting premise was the belief, among advocates of amateurism, that entertainment, which would provide a form of work for the athlete, was not acceptable because it subjugated the athlete to the promoters and thereby involved a loss of autonomy and hence of disinterestedness. Accordingly, since all should perform their share of productive work, sport could not be a full-time vocation. As with the financial interpretation the assumptions linking motives with observable behaviour are unsound, in this case depending on ambiguities in the notions of 'recreation' and 'work'.

In addition to these arguments about the undesirability of full-time athletics, there is a further related argument in support of the separation of amateur (part-time) and professional (full-time) athletes. In this argument, it is claimed that it is unfair for part-time exponents to compete against full-time exponents because the latter have the advantage of more time to develop a higher standard. Clearly standard is related to time, and the relentless raising of standards, which seems an essential consequence of the pursuit of excellence, has perhaps more than anything else, put pressure on the code of amateurism. Gradually the idea of the full-time athlete has become acceptable, and what was available once only to those privileged with independent means or patronage has become available to all. Again, though, it is important to note that the issue of full-time or part-time bears no necessary connection to the notion of amateurism as disinterestedness. Just as we are quite able to accept that full-time (professional) concert pianists or painters may pursue their art for its own sake, so with the athlete.

The interpretation of amateurism in terms of social class, which associates it closely with the idea of an English, Victorian gentleman, clearly involves a number of questionable assumptions. Here it is assumed that the distinction between 'done for its own sake' and 'done for some further purpose' can be interpreted as the distinction between an upper and middle class view of games as pastimes and a working class view of games as another opportunity 'to make a bit.'¹⁹ The social class interpretation really re-interprets the distinction between paid and unpaid into the distinction between honorable and menial. Enforcing the distinction then becomes a way of conspicuously demonstrating status and wealth. The chivalrous gentleman followed a code which required him to be an honorable opponent and a good loser who played games for the pleasure of playing, not to win. He also had a conspicuous lack of interest in money, and regarded practising with disdain.²⁰ Because some working class occupations developed a proficiency which gave an advantage in some sports (and thus were equivalent to training), workers in those occupations were excluded from competing with the gentleman amateur. As with the interpretation of amateurism in terms of time, the matter of standard becomes a reason for keeping the amateurs apart from those whose work gives them an advantage directly or indirectly. In this social class interpretation, though, the distinction has much wider social significance as it is incorporated into the broad stereotypes of different classes. Accordingly it is an interpretation of amateurism very much tied to a particular time and place, and like the other interpretations incorporates a number of questionable assumptions.

Although the notion of the gentleman has little relevance to contemporary sport, it is clear that traces of the concept of chivalry have been retained and incorporated into the ideas of sportsmanship and fair play. These will be discussed later. Strenk²¹ sees this as part of a moral dimension of amateurism; the other part has to do with conduct outside the arena. Of this latter kind he cites a number of cases of infringing the amateur code: consuming alcoholic beverages, disobeying officials, engaging in unruly behaviour not befitting representatives of a country. It is not difficult to see this general code of behaviour as a remnant of the code of the chivalrous gentleman, imposed upon athletes by administrators whose sporting education is of a different generation. Such a code of conduct seems quite appropriate to those who see one of

the main values of sport as the development of character. The link between athletic excellence and human excellence is of course the central tenet of Olympism as a philosophy of education. This interpretation of amateurism, then, places it in an educational context, and like the other interpretations, in doing so it incorporates a number of questionable assumptions in an effort to control motives by controlling behaviour.

The distinction between the various interpretations of amateurism, expressed in terms of rules constituting the amateur code, and the underlying idea makes it possible that arguments which establish the desirability of rejecting the code might leave the basic idea unscathed. In other words arguments against the amateur code, in terms of money, or time, or social class or conduct may be irrelevant to the underlying idea of sport for its own sake. There is no necessary connection between the motives of athletes and whether they gain financially, or are full-time, or belong to a certain social class, or behave in certain ways outside the stadium. A full-time, paid athlete, lower class and rather unruly in behaviour outside the arena could still be an amateur, in the sense that he, or she, regarded athletics as an end in itself.

Indeed a consideration of the arguments usually advanced against the amateur code strongly support this possibility. For the most part opponents of the amateur code have argued that it is unworkable. Attempts to enforce it seem to have resulted in inconsistency because of the variety of sports in a variety of social and cultural contexts. This results in innumerable ways of flouting the code and avoiding detection. In such a climate often trivial infringements are severely punished, merely because they are detected, while major breaches, more carefully concealed because there is more at stake, are undetected. Inevitably this becomes common knowledge and gives rise to charges of hypocrisy, dishonesty, manipulation and fraud.²² Although this is a particularly persuasive criticism of an institution which is concerned with fair play, it is not a case against the underlying idea itself.

A second focus for criticism of the amateur code is that it imposes restrictions on the pursuit of excellence. As the standards have become higher and the pursuit of excellence more demanding, and excellence more significant politically and commercially, the pressure to remove restrictions has become greater. This pressure is increased when the reasons for the restrictions are neither clearly understood nor highly valued.

There are two kinds of reasons which de Coubertin offers for making the idea of sport for its own sake, disinterestedness, part of his practical theory of athletics. One, the importance of the willingness to dare, is central to his idea of sport, and will be discussed later. The other reason is education: the capacity of the athletic endeavour to inculcate the important moral qualities depends on the young pursuing excellence in sport for its own sake. This, and related educational reasons are not explicitly discussed further in this paper.

The lack of general appreciation of these reasons, as a counter to the arguments against restrictions on the pursuit of excellence, is due both to the tenuous links between the idea of disinterestedness and its various interpretations in the amateur code, and to the fact that "a new dominant social definition of sport has slowly been consolidated", as the dominant culture "has expanded the utilitarian justification in sport from the moral and personal to the economic and the professional."²³ In short,

athletics at the highest level is not valued for its educational contribution. Accordingly, the restriction of the pursuit of excellence lacks a compelling justification, and so arguments to remove the restrictions prevail. Again, though, there are arguments against interpretations of amateurism rather than against the idea itself.

Glader,²⁴ in his comprehensive study of amateurism, does briefly direct attention to the relationship between athletics and the underlying idea of amateurism, and makes two points. One is that statements about the necessity for certain motives should not be included in any eligibility code because of the impossibility of verification. Clearly this is sensible and it has been argued here that the truth of this claim is what made it necessary to have various behavioural interpretations of the underlying motive. His second point however illustrates clearly how easily the underlying idea can be variously represented:

In a speech made in 1969, Brundage extolled the values and importance of the Olympic Movement. He equated the amateur spirit with 'the seeking for perfection'. He said that devotion to a task was the secret of success'. To equate the amateur spirit with a seeking for perfection is incorrect because amateurism implies pleasure, play, and recreation and not a striving for excellence or perfection. In athletics however a strong striving for excellence and perfection exists.²⁵

Glader sees a conflict between the demands of the pursuit of excellence which make athletics like work, and not always pleasurable, and the essentially light-hearted, pleasant, less-than-serious atmosphere of play and mere recreation. The force of this argument though depends on a particular, unargued interpretation of the terms 'pleasure', 'play' and 'recreation'. Pleasure can vary from light-hearted spontaneous enjoyment to deep prolonged satisfaction. Play may be serious or frivolous, assiduous or slap dash. Recreation may mean merely 'part-time' or 'done to restore one for work', or 'done for pleasure'. Doing something for pleasure is another way of saying that it is done for no further purpose; it is done for its own sake. All the rewards reside in the activity itself. What these rewards are will depend on the activity and how seriously it is exploited for what it has to offer. In speaking of devotion to the task Brundage is suggesting two ideas as the secret of success: doing it for its own sake and doing it seriously. I will return to these ideas later.

In attempting to establish some conflict between the idea of the amateur spirit and the pursuit of excellence, Glader echoes Keating's distinction between sport and athletics, and his claim that for the athlete there is a strong tendency towards professionalism.²⁶ This claim would appear to be true if professionalism is understood in terms of the interpretations in the amateur code as 'part' or 'full-time'. Glader's argument, however, does not establish anything more than the possibility of a conflict between athletics and the amateur spirit. In short he fails to distinguish between 'playing tennis for its own sake', and 'playing tennis as well as possible for its own sake'.

It is interesting to note however that Lenk²⁷ argues not merely that the amateur spirit is not in conflict with athletics, but that, because of the high standard, "an

almost complete devotion of one's intentions and interests" is *required* for top achievement. "Extrinsic motivation would only disturb here, where deep intrinsic devotion is required." This is Brundage's *secret* of success and is the idea to be explored further in this paper.

To this point it has been argued that the link between the fundamental idea of amateurism (athletics for its own sake, athletics in the amateur spirit, athletics as an end in itself, disinterested athletics) and the interpretations of it in various forms of the amateur code are such that arguments against the code do not count against the fundamental idea. The code may be rejected, as it has been largely, but the relevance, if any, of the amateur spirit to the practical theory of athletics still remains to be established. The case is not altered if it is not accepted that 'for its own sake' is the fundamental idea of amateurism. Even if it is just another interpretation along with those in terms of time, money, social class and conduct, it is the remaining interpretation after the others have been rejected.

Before discussing athletics in the amateur spirit it is perhaps wise to make a preliminary point about the relationship between matters of history and matters of logic. Young²⁸ has demonstrated, conclusively it seems, that anyone who has claimed that the importance of amateurism in modern Olympic sport is based upon its importance in the Ancient Olympics is grossly mistaken. Although de Coubertin looked towards the Ancient Olympics to give status to the motivational focus of his programme of educational reform, he could not, demonstrates Young, find support there for the idea of the glorious amateur, at least in so far as matters of money, time or social class are concerned. The competence of de Coubertin and others as historians, however, is not an issue here. The logical relationships between interpretations and their connections with the idea of athletics, do not depend on the sources of the ideas. The task here is to consider an idea and see what merit it has.

The concept which now remains for consideration is 'athletics for its own sake'. This concept combines the idea of athletics, which includes the notions of the pursuit of excellence and the athletic contest, with the idea of doing something for its own sake. In exploring the relationships between these ideas it is important to keep in mind the context of a practical theory. This is not an attempt to describe what athletics is; it is rather to ascertain what is possible as a basis for attributing value and understanding its basis. The task is to provide a basis on which to regulate athletics, not to describe it. The ultimate aim is to decide what is worthwhile and how to protect it.

The rule-governed physical contest which is the basis of athletics can be conducted without any interest in the pursuit of excellence and either for its own sake or for some further purpose. The contest without the pursuit of excellence would not be athletics, and if engaged in for some further purpose it would not be amateur. The contest, regardless of whether it is athletics, or amateur, is a clear example of Caillois' games of *agon* in which the activity is competitive and success (that is, winning) is dependent on effort within a set of abilities defined by the rules which are also designed to provide equality of opportunity.²⁹

For the contest to be athletics it has to be conducted in the context of the pursuit of excellence. As Keating³⁰ has emphasized, the athletic endeavour demands training, sacrifice and dedication in the quest for better performance. Training has the

purpose of increasing the athlete's potential and in the contest the aim is to actualize that increased potential, stimulated by the desire to win against like-minded opponents. Winning is taken as a sign of excellence provided that the competitors are worthy, the rules are obeyed and the victory is not due to chance. Under these conditions, the winner sets the standard of excellence, as the one who has succeeded in the most demanding test available. The winner is the only one of whom no more could be asked, although of course on another day, in another contest, the demands set by opponents may be greater. In a real sense the quality of a victory depends on who has been beaten.

In the pursuit of excellence, then, the competitors necessarily cooperate. They cooperate by making it as difficult as possible for each other. In this way, by serving their own ends, to do as well as they can, they serve also, thereby, the ends of the other competitors. By making the contest as demanding as possible, each athlete's pursuit is furthered and the winning achievement has as much worth as possible. Perhaps this mutual dependence is the basis for feelings of respect and affection between long-standing opponents. To the serious athlete incompetent opponents are of no use; although they make winning more easily attainable, they make it not worth having.

It is important, in avoiding a shallow conception of athletics, to give due weight to the fact that it is the pursuit of excellence rather than excellence which is essential. Clearly it is to be expected that the most assiduous pursuit is most likely to result in the best performance, and certainly as the standard becomes higher it is increasingly unlikely that victory will be achieved by someone who has not been dedicated in pursuit. For the most part then, winning can be taken as a valid sign not only of excellence but also of the necessarily dedicated *pursuit* of that excellence. In so far as that pursuit demands to an extraordinary degree certain desirable human qualities then it is worthy of our admiration and applause in a way that the achievement itself is not. Ignoring for the moment the common forms of nationalistic or commercial significance attributed extrinsically, and in the case of some events, a certain aesthetic value, the winning achievement in itself has no value. It is not the javelin's flying a remarkable distance in itself which is worthy of any kind of applause; it is the fact that it was thrown by a human in an athletic context, together with the appreciation of what that has meant in terms of endeavour. The deep appreciation of the athletic performance is 'knowing what it takes'. Accordingly, anything which detracts from the validity of the inference from a great performance to a great pursuit detracts from our admiration: drugs, cheating, gamesmanship, freak endowment. A further consequence is that when we applaud the winner we also applaud the losers to the extent that their pursuit of excellence contributed to the winning performance.

It is clear that athletics can be undertaken as an end in itself or as a means to some further end. What kind of differences are there between athletics as an end and athletics as a means? The distinction between an activity as an end and the activity as a means is a distinction in the way the activity is valued by the participant. When an activity is a means to an end it is judged in relation to the purpose of achieving that end. Evaluation is all relative to the efficacy in producing the end. Excellence is in terms of criteria of efficiency, cost, and side effects. An activity pursued as a means is always perceived in the shadow of the end by virtue of which it is called a means.

The development of an activity regarded as a means is constrained by its relation to the end to which it owes its identity and importance. Of course an activity valued as a means can come to be valued as an end in itself, in which case it comes to be viewed in a new light; it is judged according to a new set of criteria, as worthwhile or not.

It would seem to follow that anyone interested in the pursuit of excellence in an activity would best approach that pursuit as an end in itself. With such an approach all of the attention is focussed on the activity in the context of trying to do better, without the distraction of external goals. The difficulties encountered in the activity do not present themselves as obstacles to the achievement of the external goal but as challenges which make the pursuit worthwhile, in the sense that if it were straightforward and simple there would be no point to it all. Those who are devoted to their tasks are much more open to the intricate reality of the demands which they savour and conquer with the satisfaction and joy which comes from the exercise of increasing competence and skill. The pursuit itself is not regarded as time wasted in reaching a desirable goal, but as time enjoying the object of one's devotion.

In any discussion of doing something for its own sake, one conceptual difficulty is the problem of where to draw the line which separates the activity itself from its consequences or outcomes.³¹ In many discussions of amateurism this problem arises because it is easy to speak in a way that makes athletics seem like a means to ends such as winning, satisfaction, pleasure, recognition, excellence, and medals. If we are not careful it is easy to regard such outcomes as ends in the same sense as more obviously external ones such as money, or fame. It is not possible here to do more than indicate the kind of discussions which would need to be undertaken to make the distinctions clear. The important distinction is between those ends which are conceptually related to the activity, in the sense that they cannot be described fully without reference to the activity itself, and those which are only contingently related. For example, the satisfaction and pleasure which result from an activity are necessarily related to the activity itself. Doing something for pleasure is doing it for no further purpose. Although there may be many sources of pleasure, the reality is more accurately described as 'many pleasures'. Similarly, winning and excellence require reference to the activity itself in order to be fully explained, and are thus internal to the activity. Most external rewards, of course, are tied to winning. It has to be noted, though, that sometimes 'wanting to win' may mean 'wanting to be a winner', in which case the activity is merely a means to the end. Similarly with 'recognition' and 'medals': distinctions need to be made. We can usefully distinguish the recognition which consists in understanding what an achievement means in itself (what it takes), the kind which other athletes would have, from the recognition which the ignorant spectators accord to an athlete from their own country. In the case of medals it is likewise important to distinguish between a medal as a symbol of an achievement, and a medal as a key to riches and public esteem. The significance of a medal may be inward-looking or outwards-looking.

It was suggested above that the assessment of an activity regarded as a means is relative to the end for which it is a means. In other words, it is subject to considerations which would not be relevant when the activity is an end in itself. Now, in the case of rule-governed activities like athletics it would seem that the pressures which might be exerted by some external end on athletics as a means, are

prevented by the rules from distorting the activity. To some extent this is true: the professional athlete still has to conform to the rules in order to achieve the external end. When the activity is a means, however, and thereby judged in relation to the external goal, conforming, too, becomes instrumental and is judged in terms of expediency. To the extent that the rules define the activity to which the amateur athlete is devoted, one would expect that the rules are obeyed willingly. These are not seen as a constraint on the achievement of a goal but as defining that goal. In contrast, where the activity is a means to some end, the rules are a constraint, to be broken where possible. Covert rule breaking becomes an art form, limited only by the competence of the officials. It might be said that for the amateur the rules are seen as constitutive, whereas for the professional they are seen as regulative.³²

Similarly, one might expect different attitudes to the opponents in athletics as an end and athletics as a means. When athletics is a means, opponents, like rules, are seen as an obstruction in the quest for the goal, and are treated accordingly. As outlined above, when athletics is an end, opponents are seen as a necessary element in the pursuit of excellence; they define the task and share the same hopes and desires. They are valued for their competence, because the greater it is, the greater is their potential contribution to the pursuit of excellence. The shared respect which arises from a mutual appreciation of the reality of their interdependence, can provide the basis for a code of behaviour which grows from within.

The willingness to dare is a necessary part of the pursuit of excellence and may well be impaired if the pursuit is a means rather than an end. Because serious athletes are constantly challenging their potential, the possibility of failure is great. Opponents set difficult tests which call for responses which are near one's limits. As in many areas of human life, a chance at the greatest success carries the greatest risk of failure. When the activity is a means, and necessarily valued primarily for its efficacy, the prospect of losing the goal may lessen the inclination to take the risks which as de Coubertin often wrote, is a crucial part of the spirit of sport. Lasch³³ recognizes this when he says that the professional is overly concerned with avoiding defeat and this has the effect of making play calculating and boring. The fear of losing lessens the chances of the outstanding performance which might produce victory.

If, then, athletics does demand some human qualities which are admirable they will be best preserved and displayed by athletes who pursue excellence for its own sake, because for these athletes these qualities are essential components of this end which is intrinsically valued. These qualities of strength and endurance, courage, perseverance, concentration, self discipline, daring and fair play are not instrumental in the pursuit of excellence, but contributory to it. They are part of it, and valuing athletics as an end in itself means valuing these components in the same way. Being devoted to their endeavour, these athletes become authentic exponents of these qualities. Because games are life made simple, the reduction in complexity allows a corresponding increase in intensity. At their best they distil some of these human qualities into a concentrated dramatic form which has the power to inspire the spectator. Novak enthusiastically recognizes these qualities and their importance when he says:

If I had to give one single reason for my love of sports it would be this: I love the tests of the human spirit. I love to see defeated teams refuse to die. I love to see impossible odds confronted. I love to see impossible dares accepted. I love to see the incredible grace lavished on simple plays - the simple flashing beauty of perfect form - but, even more, I love to see the heart that refuses to give in, refuses to panic, seizes opportunity, slips through defences, exerts itself far beyond capacity, forges momentarily of its bodily habitat an instrument of almost perfect will. Perhaps it is a form of Slavic masochism (we should never discount it), but all my life I have never known such thoroughly penetrating joys as playing with an inspired team against a team we recognized from the beginning had every reason to beat us. I love it when the other side is winning and there are only moments left; I love it when it would be reasonable to be reconciled to defeat, but one will not, cannot; I love it when a last set of calculated, reckless, free, and impassioned efforts is crowned with success. When I see others play that way, I am full of admiration, of gratitude. That is the way I believe the human race should live. When human beings actually accomplish it, it is for me as if the intentions of the Creator were suddenly limpid before our eyes: as though into the fiery heart of the Creator we had momentary insight.³⁴

In this he is echoing Santayana who argued that, although the great achievements of athletes are rare, 'the benefit is diffused' because we can all participate in our imagination and 'the whole soul is stirred by a spectacle that represents the basis of its life'.³⁵

It has been argued here that the amateur spirit is essential to serious, worthwhile athletics. The unfortunate history of the attempts to enforce an amateur code should not obscure our appreciation of the reality of the athletic endeavour. Accordingly a practical theory of athletics must have as one of its basic principles the desirability of sustaining the pursuit of excellence for its own sake. It is perhaps ironic that as the rhetoric of amateurism has succumbed to the arguments of the allegedly tough-minded, the standards of achievement are so high that, as Lenk has argued 'deep intrinsic devotion is required' for success in the long run.³⁶ It is not that athletes motivated by the financial rewards of success will never be successful. Many factors contribute to success; sometimes physical endowment may be such as to compensate for an attitude that is less than optimal. In general though, intrinsic motivation will be a valuable, if not necessary, component of the athletes' equipment for a sustained pursuit of excellence.

This, of course poses a particular difficulty for the coach and the administrator who have the goals of promoting the highest levels of sport, and accordingly have to encourage activity for its own sake. They face the same difficulty as that faced by those who attempted to enforce amateurism by means of external constraints. The question becomes, for the administrator, one of how to organize athletic competition in a way which preserves the deep intrinsic devotion which is a development of the

natural joy in movement and the fascination of skill which attract the young to sport. It is easy to say that pleasure is a key factor, but clearly this is not an easy task and much more needs to be said.

In the wider context, the implications of the essential contribution of the amateur spirit raise fascinating difficulties for the media and for the presentation of the Olympic Games in particular.

For the media, athletics is entertainment, but this becomes a source of distortion if it fails to recognize the distinction between 'athletics for its own sake' and 'athletics for entertainment'. Attempts to make it more entertaining are of course motivated by the desire to increase the size of the audience. As Lasch³⁷ argues, this new audience is inevitably ignorant and needs to have the fundamental activity augmented by readily accessible spectacle, and superficial nationalistic identification. While the athletes certainly benefit substantially from this it is not without some cost to the institution of athletics itself. If athletics does have a basic meaning then the development of the appreciation of that meaning will produce a more genuine entertainment that is uniquely athletic. Regarding athletics as part of the entertainment industry is trivialising it.

The final implication is relevant both to the media and to those who control the Olympic Games. The Games deny their very essence if they appear to use athletics as an excuse for having a party, for selling advertising space, for showing the superiority of a political system, for promoting the tourist industry or economy of a country, or for entertainment. The Games should be a clear and unambiguous glorification of the athlete. Further it should be remembered that the athlete who is worthy of glorification will be, whether paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, upper class or lower class, basically an amateur - someone devoted to the pursuit of excellence as a worthwhile human activity.³⁸

Notes

1. Reported in *Gazette de Lausanne* May 18, 1913.
2. Walter B. Gallie, *Philosophy and Historical Understanding* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964).
3. For example, Hans Lenk, *Social Philosophy of Athletics* (Champaign, IL. Stipes Publishing Co., 1979).
4. Carl Diem, "Art and Amateurism," *Olympic Review*, 3 October 1938 Reprinted in *The Olympic Idea* (Cologne. Carl Diem Institute 1966).
5. Nikos Nissiotis, "Olympism and Today's Reality," (Address at I.O.A. Fifth International Session for members and staffs of NOCs and IFs. June 1985).
6. R. Czula, "Pierre de Coubertin and Modern Olympism," *Quest* (XXIV Summer 1975).
7. For example, Eugene A. Glader *Amateurism and Athletics* (West Point, N.Y.: Leisure Press 1978) and W. Robert Morford, "Olympism: Tattered Remnant of a Victorian Fancy," *International Journal of Physical Education* (XXI: 2, 1986).

8. James W. Keating, "The Heart of the Problem of Amateur Athletics," *Journal of General Education* (XCI, 1965, pp. 261-275).
9. Lenk *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
10. Andrew Strenk, "Amateurism: The Myth and the Reality," in Jeffrey O. Segrave and Donald Chu (Eds.), *The Olympic Games in Transition* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1988) pp. 303-327.
11. *ibid*, p.321.
12. *ibid* p.322.
13. Glader, *op.cit.*
14. David C. Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (Philadelphia, Ares, 1984).
15. Strenk, *op. cit.*
16. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, in J.O. Urmson, *Aristotle's Ethics* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1988).
17. See for example Klaus V. Meier, "An Affair of Flutes: An Appreciation of Play," *Journal of Philosophy of Sport* (XII, 1980, p.24-45).
18. X.L. Messenesi, *A History of the Olympics* (Drake Publishing 1976).
19. Henry Graves, "A Philosophy of Sport," *The Contemporary Review* LXXVIII, Dec. 1900, reprinted in Ellen W. Gerber (Ed.). *Sport and the Body* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1972).
20. Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot*. (Yale University Press, 1981).
21. Strenk, *op.cit.*
22. *ibid*
23. Richard Gruneau and Hart Cantelon, "Capitalism, Commercialism and the Olympics," in Jeffrey O. Segrave and Donald Chu (Eds.). *The Olympic Games in Transition* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1988).
24. Glader, *op.cit.*
25. *ibid.*
26. Keating, *op.cit*
27. Lenk, *op.cit.*
28. Young, *op.cit.*
29. Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1962).
30. Keating, *op.cit.*
31. T.S. Champlin, "Doing things for their own sake," *Philosophy*, 62, 1987.

32. The distinction between constitutive and regulative rules is described by John Searle in "What is a Speech Act?" in J.R. Searle *The Philosophy of Language* (Oxford University Press, 1971) as follows:

Regulative rules regulate a pre-existing activity, an activity whose existence is logically independent of the existence of the rules.
Constitutive rules constitute (and also regulate) an activity the existence of which is logically dependent on the rules.

The distinction, which also occurs in John Rawls, "Two Concepts of Rules," *Philosophical Review* (1955) in the context of discussing social practices is widely referred to in discussions of rules of games, although no clear criteria for allocating rules to particular categories have been established. Here I suggest, as another topic for another day, that the distinction may be made in terms of how participants regard the rules, rather than as different kinds of rules. To regard rules as regulative is to see them as obstacles in the pursuit of some goal; to regard them as constitutive is to see them as defining that goal.

For other discussions involving this distinction see, for example, Bernard Suits, "Tricky Triad: Games Play and Sport," and Klaus V. Meier, "Triad Trickery: Playing With Sport and Games," *Journal of Philosophy of sport* (XV, 1988, pp. 1-30).

33. Christopher Lasch, The Corruption of Sports, *The New York Review of Books* (XXIV:7, 1977).

34. Michael Novak, *The Joy of Sports* (New York: Basic Books, 1976) p. 150.

35. George Santayana, "Philosophy on the Bleachers," in Ellen W. Gerber and William Morgan (Eds.) *Sport and the Body* (2nd Ed), Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1979.

36. Lenk, *op.cit.*, p.79.

37. Lasch, *op.cit.*

38. An invited address based on an earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Second IOC World Congress on Sport Sciences, Barcelona, October 1991.