

Re-evaluation necessary

What is an amateur athlete?

Ask ten people to define amateurism and you'll probably get ten different answers. The trouble is, the bureaucratic organizations that control sports function the same way.

The International Olympic Committee, the Amateur Athletic Union and the National Collegiate Athletic Association all operate with their own self-serving definitions.

The only thing amateur about these organizations is the way they treat the athletes. At the United States Olympic trials last summer, several athletes failed to get reimbursed for living expenses. For an East coast sprinter, a trip to the track trials in Eugene, Ore. was a costly venture, especially if he failed to make the squad.

The NCAA defines an amateur student-athlete as "one who engages in athletics for the educational, physical, mental and social benefits he derives therefrom, and to who athletics is an avocation."

Educational and social benefits are fine pursuits, but how many football players spend four years in college without earning a degree. Their only interest is graduating into the pro ranks.

Handing out a full grant-in aid to a high school student is exceptable by NCAA-standards. Whether he graduates four years later is just a statistic to them. When a college player doesn't graduate, it's just like the pros signing a player for four years and then placing him on waivers.

A few clauses later in its by-laws, the NCAA comes up with this gem: "the terms of this principle shall not apply to a student-athlete participating in a contest not recognized by the Association as an intercollegiate sport."

This clause effectively prevented collegiate stars from participating in the Maccabiah Games in Israel in 1969, and, more recently, the AAU-sponsored United States-Russia track meet at Richmond, Va. earlier this year.

Whenever an athlete or institution challenges the NCAA governing body, the attempt usually is met with failure.

Penn decathlete Fred Samara competed against the Russians with the threat of losing his eligibility. The NCAA

then pressured Penn into declaring him ineligible for the season. Samara brought the NCAA to court and came out a winner, an uncommon occurrence when you battle President Walter Byers and the boys in Kansas City.

The reason Samara prevailed is the current hearings on Capitol Hill concerning amateurism in sports. A big stink by Samara would make the NCAA look bad and the Senate might start investigating.

Last March Michigan Congressman James O'Hara introduced a bill that would "protect the freedom of student-athletes and their coaches to participate as representatives



mark simenson

assistant sports editor

of the United States in amateur international athletic events..."

According to a story by Inquirer columnist Frank Dolson, Tom Hansen, the NCAA assistant executive director, sent out a memo on the bill.

"I write to solicit your assistance...as one of the individuals most active in NCAA affairs. Time is of the essence, too. I urge you to examine the NCAA testimony, and then using the points you consider most pertinent: (1) write the member of Congress who represents your district, (2) write both of your U.S. Senators and (3) write any other member of Congress with whom you may be acquainted. "Please stress the importance of killing the O'Hara bill."

Perhaps, what is needed most of all, is a redefinition of the organizations that control sports and a rediscovery of what amateurism used to be all about.

Carol sparks netwomen's future

Finding the tennis courts the Penn State women play on is roughly equivalent to locating Shangri-La in a raging blizzard. The netwomen's self-imposed obscurity may soon be ending due to netwoman Carol Backenstose's arrival.

The women's top netter has strung together a series of triumphs that has already made her the most outstanding netter coach Joan Nessler has tutored. In two Eastern championships the enthusiastic sophomore has been eliminated once in the semi- and once in the quarter-finals, both times against the number one seed.

This season she has chalked up a 5-1 record and went as far as the quarter-finals in the prestigious MALTA tournament. Her only regular season loss was a tight 7-5, 6-4 decision to Mindy Williams of West Chester. Last summer Backenstose was selected as second alternate for the National Junior Wightman Cup team.

"Carol has a hard hitting, driving baseline game," Nessler said, "she has a hard serve and volley. She's the best Penn State has had since we've begun (1961)."

Comparisons between her and the men's head netter, Jan Bortner, are uncommonly easy. Starting with the fact both are sophomores,

there are great similarities in style. Both offer opponents a strong serve and feature a baseline game. Both have been building net games and working on strategy. The similarities are not purely random because both have been under the guiding hand of men's coach Holmes Cathrall. Backenstose began receiving pointers in high school, traveling to Happy Valley from hometown Hershey to gather advice from the Lion coach.

Although Backenstose is content with watching the men's team and participating on the women's at Penn State, she had other feelings at Hershey High School. There no woman could try out for male squads if the women had a team.

"If a girl has the ability to beat a fellow, then I think she should play on the team," she said. "I wish I had a chance in high school, I wanted to go out but I couldn't because of the school's policy."

On less serious matters of male domination, Backenstose admits rooting for Margaret Court against devious hustler Bobby Riggs. She concedes the senior male racketman is a good strategist with an endless repertoire of shots and some speed to boot, but she believes Riggs will swallow some chauvinist crow if he clashes with Billy Jean King.

If Backenstose is right, though, Riggs will have another opportunity to gloat when he meets Chrissy Everet. She predicts Bobby

will wreak havoc with young Chrissy's steady, back court style.

Carol's own path to tennis began at eight with Mrs. Backenstose pushing her daughter onto the courts and into the swimming pool.

It soon became obvious her skill with a racket outshone her ability in the water so she soon gave up swimming for drilling in tennis.

The practice soon paid off. She walked off with three consecutive Pennsylvania Jaycee championships and at 16, a truck load of firsts. The next year she began lessons with Cathrall, liked the campus, and wound up holding down the number one spot on the women's team.

—Bill Guthlein

Olympians lobby for changes

WASHINGTON (AP) — A group of Olympians urged Congress yesterday to help develop reforms in the way amateur athletics are organized and run in the United States.

They also suggested that money be provided so athletes with expertise can travel around the country to develop future talent.

In addition, they called for the creation of a National Sports Development program, as proposed by Congress, that would collect and dispense federal and private funds to go to sports groups at all levels for facilities, instruction and competition.

Philip O. Krumm, president of the U.S. Olympic Committee, said government

assistance is welcomed and needed — but not governmental intervention.

"In the organization and administration of amateur sports it would be inappropriate and discouraging and a deterrent to the volunteer leadership we have by the many dedicated people presently in the Olympic movement," said Krumm.

The measures concern the need for a national sports development fund, the practicality of a federal sports commission and the U.S. Olympic program.

The Olympians testifying were Willie Davenport, hurdles; Harold Conally, hammer; Tom McMillen, basketball; Donna de Verona, swimming and Suzi Chaffee, skiing.

ATTENTION
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Help with Fall Orientation
of Science Students

Meeting 7:00 P.M.
Thursday May 24 421 Davey Lab

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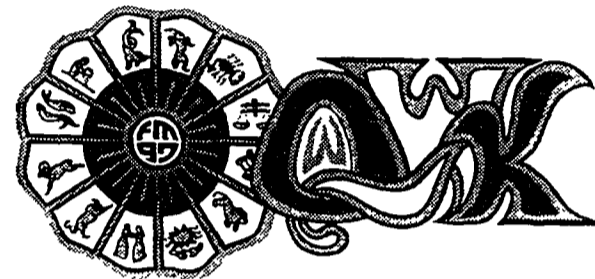


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UNIVERSITY CALENDAR

Tuesday, May 22, 1973

SPECIAL EVENTS

Alard String Quartet recital, 8:30 p.m., Music Bldg. recital hall
Final round of John Henry Frizzell Extempore Speaking Contest, 7 p.m., Room 112 Chambers.
5 O'Clock Theatre, "Sure, Sure, Shirley," by DeeDee Bryant, 5:20 p.m., Pavilion.
Black Arts Festival, Student Fashion Show, 8 p.m., Schwab; play, "The Black Female Experience," 1 p.m., HUB lounge.
Pollock Area Orientation Committee Jammy, 7:30 p.m. to midnight, HUB ballroom, with group, "Sweet Georgia Brown." 25 cent donation.

SEMINARS

Chemistry, 12:45 p.m., Room 310 Whitmore. Dr. Ronald Mason, University of Sussex.
Biochemistry, 4 p.m., Room 101 Althouse. N. Schroedl, on "Mitochondrial Protein Synthesis."
Earth and Mineral Sciences, 3:45 p.m., Room 26 Mineral Sciences. Alumni Fellow William Bellano, retired president, Occidental Oil and Island Creek Coal, on "Contemporary Problems of the Mineral Industry: Energy and Politics, Mineral Supply, International Aspects."

LECTURES

The Slavic and Soviet Language and Area Center Lecture-Seminar Series, 3 p.m., Room 124 Sparks. Piotr Sztompka, Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Warsaw, on "Sociological Research in Poland," and at 8 p.m., Room 124 Sparks, on "A Polish Sociologist Views Functionalism in Sociology."

MEETINGS

Association of Women Students, 7 p.m., Room 203 HUB.
Earth and Mineral Sciences Student Council, 6:15 p.m., Room 244 Deike. Final meeting.

FILMS

Commonsplace Theatre, "Arsenic and Old Lace," with Cary Grant, Priscilla Lane, Raymond Massey, 8 and 10 p.m., Room 112 Kern.

INTEREST GROUPS

Achery Club, 5-7 p.m., Room 3 White.
Associated Mormon Students, 7:30 p.m., Room 52 White.
Biological Society, 7 p.m., Room 8 Life Sciences 1.
Keystone Society, 7 p.m., Room 301 Boucke.
Worker's League, 7:30 p.m., Room 167 Willard.
Sigma Delta Epsilon, 7:30 p.m., Room 101 Kern. Election of officers; film, "Electric Labyrinth," at 8 p.m.
University Union Board, 7-9 p.m., HUB reading room.

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