

FURTHER TRENDS IN SUBSIDIZED ATHLETICS

Dr. Forrest C. Allen  
University of Kansas.

(Delivered at Cape  
Girardeau, Mo.,  
on Nov. 26, 1941.)

Speaking antithetically of Mark Antony's famous funeral oration, permit me to say that "I came to praise football, not to bury it."

Athletics in the American colleges are paradoxical. They are the most severely criticized activity of college life, and they are the most loved. They are the most rational channel into which to direct the energies of youth, and they are, when improperly administered, the most dangerous and diseased. They are the most vulnerable activity of the American college life, and they are one of the most vital. Perhaps it is because we love them that we ill-treat and punish them. The inherent Anglo-Saxon love of conquest and combat in the sports and games endangers the very object of its love. College students view athletics as an end in themselves. College professors steeped in habits of mind-training and hard work see them largely as misspent effort. Herein are the two extremes in over-evaluation - youth in an over-evaluation of athletics, and middle age in an over-evaluation of academic training. These two extremes are still far apart. The problem of the modern administrator is to find a middle ground.

Thirty-five years ago, when intercollegiate football was on trial because of physical dangers to the participants, the late Theodore Roosevelt, ex-President of the United States, saved the game for the good that he thought it possessed. Today, with the game on trial again, this time because of alleged moral and spiritual dangers, there is need of another great leader to point the way ahead. The game should be lifted up and out of its distortions into its truer plane of inspiration and effectiveness in college life. In reality there is little of serious