TABLE I

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS WITH REFERENCE TO PROFICIENCY AT SPORTS AND GAMES

Types of Activity	No. of Cases	Mean Age	Standard Deviation	Yrs. of Maximum Proficiency
Professional baseball (not inc. pitching)	3,126	29.07	4.04	28
Professional baseball (pitching)	1,666	29.50	4.39	27
Major league batting championships..	96	29.16	3.46	26–29
Major league pitching championships..	88	28.18	3.72	26–31
Major league stolen-base championships	63	27.96	3.46	25–29
Professional boxers	448	26.98	3.98	25–26
Tennis champions (French, English and American)	317	27.63	5.25	25–27
Professional ice hockey players	823	27.56	4.00	24–25
Professional football players	485	25.72	2.33	24
Corn-husking champions	87	30.39	6.20	26–30
Automobile racers	54	28.81	4.50	27–30
Bowling champions (individual performance)	58	32.78	7.56	30–34
Bowling champions (team performance)	238	33.38	7.83	27–37
Rifle and pistol shooters	630	32.05	8.13	27
Duck pin bowlers (men)	91	32.19	4.36	30–34
Duck pin bowlers (women)	90	28.13	3.47	25–29
Billiards (world record breakers)	42	35.67	5.83	30–34
Billiards (world championship winners)	136	34.35	8.75	25–29
Golf (professional championships— English and American)	48	32.33	6.49	30–34
Golf (open championships— English and American)	88	31.01	6.37	25–34
Golf (amateur championships— English and American)	74	29.88	7.66	25–29

that many amateurs abandon amateur athletics before they have developed their greatest potential skill.* If this latter hypothesis is valid, it follows that we can discover man's potentially best years at sports and games only by studying the records of professional athletes.

The present study suggests that man's proficiency at such violent and vigorous activities as professional football and professional ice hockey wanes relatively early. These two activities require the players to make frequent and rather reckless bodily contacts. Activities of a less violent nature, such as professional golf, rifle and pistol shooting, corn husking, billiards, and bowling, can be participated in successfully at somewhat older age levels. These latter activities may be described as non-combative since they do not necessitate the pitting of one's strength against that of an opponent.

The foregoing data suggest also that, for certain measurable behaviors, the shape of the performance age curve varies both with the type of function that is measured and also with the excellence of the performance. Thus, if age curves are constructed for baseball performance of sand-lot quality, such curves would doubtless be flatter and broader than are the curves that are set forth in Figures 1 and 2. Both small boys and middle-aged men can participate successfully in sand-lot baseball. But when data for only major league performance are utilized, the baseball curves reveal relatively narrow