

RESEARCH QUARTERLY

TABLE II  
NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES PER FIVE-YEAR INTERVAL

| Type of Activity                                | Age Interval |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
|---|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|   | 15-<br>19    | 20-<br>24 | 25-<br>29 | 30-<br>34 | 35-<br>39 | 40-<br>44 | 45-<br>49 | 50-<br>54 | 55-<br>59 | 60-<br>64 | 65-<br>69 |
| Prof. baseball (not inc. pitching)              | 12           | 476       | 1,443     | 944       | 226       | 25        |           |           |           |           |           |
| Prof. baseball (pitching) .....                 | 8            | 216       | 763       | 501       | 137       | 37        |           |           |           |           |           |
| Major league batting<br>championships .....     |              | 9         | 51        | 31        | 5         |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Major league pitching<br>championships .....    | 1            | 17        | 41        | 26        | 3         |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Major league stolen-base<br>championships ..... |              | 13        | 33        | 16        | 1         |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Professional boxers .....                       | 6            | 142       | 208       | 75        | 14        | 3         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Tennis champions<br>(Fr. Eng. and Amer.) .....  | 12           | 84        | 133       | 54        | 28        | 6         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Prof. ice hockey players .....                  | 6            | 235       | 375       | 167       | 37        | 3         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Prof. football players .....                    |              | 214       | 242       | 29        |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Corn-husking champions .....                    | 2            | 16        | 27        | 23        | 13        | 4         | 1         | 1         |           |           |           |
| Automobile racers .....                         | 1            | 4         | 26        | 15        | 7         |           | 1         |           |           |           |           |
| Bowling champions (Ind. perf.)                  | 2            | 5         | 13        | 18        | 12        | 6         |           | 1         |           | 1         |           |
| Bowling champions (Team perf.)                  | 5            | 24        | 60        | 54        | 50        | 25        | 10        | 7         | 1         | 1         |           |
| Rifle and pistol shooters .....                 | 33           | 95        | 153       | 137       | 97        | 82        | 20        | 5         | 7         | 1         |           |
| Duck pin bowlers (men) .....                    |              | 4         | 25        | 37        | 22        | 3         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Duck pin bowlers (women) .....                  | 1            | 17        | 43        | 29        |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Billiards (world records) .....                 |              |           | 5         | 15        | 12        | 5         | 5         |           |           |           |           |
| Billiards (world championships)                 | 1            | 19        | 32        | 25        | 24        | 16        | 12        | 5         | 1         |           |           |
| Prof. golf (Eng. and American)                  |              | 7         | 8         | 20        | 9         | 3         |           |           | 1         |           |           |
| Open golf (Eng. and American)                   | 1            | 16        | 24        | 23        | 15        | 8         | 1         |           |           |           |           |
| Amateur golf (Eng. and<br>American) .....       | 1            | 21        | 24        | 14        | 4         | 7         | 2         |           | 1         |           |           |

peaks. Very superior baseball performance is thus exhibited over a narrower age range than is performance of lesser merit. And this latter statement seems to hold also for a number of other behaviors—for musical composition, for literary endeavor, and for certain kinds of scientific achievement.<sup>1</sup>

For several types of skill that have been cited in this article it has been possible to ascertain the one year (or age level) during which men are most likely to exhibit their best performance. For several other kinds of endeavor, it has been possible to determine only the three-, the four-, or the five-year interval during which championship skill is most likely to be displayed. For golf we have had to content ourselves (for the present) with a ten-year interval.\* Some may wonder whether for most (or possibly all) activities of the kind that have been discussed in this article, there does not exist *one* year (or age level) during which groups of individuals will be most likely to exhibit their very best ability. The assembled data suggest, but they do not validate, this hypothesis. These data do demonstrate that, given sufficient time and coöperation, it will be possible to determine whether or not the fore-

\*Data were assembled separately for 415 golfers who won either first or second place in amateur, professional, and open contests. The five-year interval of maximum proficiency was ages 24 to 28 inclusive. But, as has already been indicated, the ages of maximum proficiency vary with the type of golfing contest that is under consideration.