

VALUES IN ATHLETICS*

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TODAY we are tremendously interested in the athletic life of our young people; athletics are an integral part of school and college life. Athletic administrations are much criticized for overemphasis, commercialism and deception in some high places. But athletics are the halter that enables us to capture and lead the young American mustangs of athletic endeavor to a greater usefulness during their plastic years of growing and going places.

Thirty years and more ago athletics were not an integral part of school life. They were not even a step-child. School administrators would not recognize athletics as part of school life. The pool hall proprietor and the sporting gentry of the town were the sponsors of high school and college athletic teams.

Some Specific Values

Our parents were children of pioneers and had been taught that any sort of recreation in the form of play was wrong. They were so busy hewing homes out of the wilderness of the frontier that there was no time for play. And any boy who did play was not to be considered as an energetic and purposeful young man.

But today "stone that the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner." We find splendid competitive teams among boys of high school and college rank. Today the heart of America is clean, athletically, because that clean heart resides in the breast of the 12-year old American boy. He is a fighter and a hero worshiper. Every great high school and college athletic star has hundreds of worshipers among younger boys. If these athletic heroes train, they set a splendid example to this oncoming generation.

The young athlete is a selfish creature. Through his athletic contests and conquests he has found by competition that he must possess not only a splendid body but a strong heart. His body is a machine and by contests with other boys he has learned that if his physical machine does not function far beyond the power of his opponent's, he is defeated.

Because he is such a selfish creature he will develop a habit of saying "No" a thousand times to temptation before he can say "Yes" once to

victory, because to him victory is sweet indeed. So, today our great young American athletes conform to training rules.

True some boys on the team do not train and some boys in school will try to "get by". But athletics should not be blamed for these indiscretions, for without a doubt the erring boy has been carried along by his love of play a great deal farther than he would have gone had he no play life.

There are some phases of athletic administrative shortcomings that should be corrected. The game of football today is taking the lives of too many high school players. To say that these boy casualties are not in proper physical condition is not enough. Boys of today are not of the tough fiber as were the sons of real pioneer parents two generations ago. The game should be modified not abolished. We must seriously consider its revision and modification.

Why are so many boys of foreign born parents playing football in American colleges today? Because they are the so-called poor boys, without the automobile, the predigested foods, the cocktail parties, the late hours, and the hours of idleness—the very things that are "softening up" our civilization. The foreign born parent is a strict disciplinarian. His son is tough enough to stand the football racket and our average American born "cannot take it."

Athletics For Girls

More time and money have been spent on the boys' program than upon the girls' program. Someone has said that there are more girls smoking cigarettes in America today than boys. If this is true, it is not primarily the fault of the girls. Rather it is the failure of educators and parents to find something that will grip and hold the girls' interest the same as athletics have for the boys.

It is at least thinkable that in the future, the educator will discover, by accident or design, a habit of behavior and activity for the girl which will absorb her self interests during the plastic stage and lead her out of a wilderness of sophistication into a new world of worthwhile romance which she has not experienced today. Perhaps a woman educator will find the answer for her sex.

In the deep currents and tides of human emotions, woman is always the first to detect the true

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