Sport in America: Builder of Character or “Characters”? 

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DEDICATION

The majority of people in the world do not seem to understand what is happening to the institution of sport as it is being promoted by governments and social institutions. This book is dedicated to all those men and women who truly understand what purpose soundly administered educational and recreational sport can and should play in the world of the twenty-first century.
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PREFACE

Naively I had thought “the world” would be a better place for all people by the turn of the 21st century—by the time I retired! However, because for so many different reasons it doesn’t seem to be heading in that direction, I am forced to conclude:

1. That in many ways we are confused about what our values are at the present,

2. That we need to reconsider them and then re-state exactly what we believe they are in light of the changing times, and, finally,

3. That we will then need to assess more carefully—on a regular basis—whether we are living up to those values we finally chose and then so often have glibly espoused with insufficient commitment to bring them to pass.

However, I’m getting ahead of myself with a story about a former kid from East Elmhurst in the Borough of Queens, a part of New York City. Somehow this “kid” who got involved with sport in a variety of settings is still kicking around at the age of 94 writing these specific words late one night after a workout in the small gym on the first floor of a condominium in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada!

How the hell I ended up in western Canada offering these “immortal words” about how the world, its citizens—including me—did or did not “screw up”, is not what this book is all about. Various opinions about values achieved or aborted will be introduced here and there in this book that is possibly my final “literary gasp” is what I want to explain. In retrospect, it feels like I have been “on the move” ever since I was born in New York City in 1919. My “final move”—other than when “my remains to be sprinkled and thrown to the winds in two places” actually get to the intended destinations—was probably to 105, 8560 General Currie Rd. in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada V6Y 1M2. It is here where I am entering these words on my Apple computer. The other final “resting places” where my ashes will be thrown to the wind is in Lake Whatcom, Bellingham, Washington.

How, or why, did “that kid” from New York City happen to end up in western Canada? Well, frankly, I actually had no other choice at a crucial time in my life. I simply did not want to be involved any longer with a university in America that annually “sold its educational soul” in the realm of intercollegiate athletics! And no Ivy-League institution where athletics was in its rightful place offered a professional preparation degree in my field so that was not a possible “out” for me! And I simply could not literally stomach the situation in intercollegiate athletics at the University of Illinois, UIUC any longer (I was actually getting a stomach ulcer!). My field of physical (activity) education was being disgraced by a “performance ethic” in athletics that was out of control—i.e., do almost “anything” to win in several gate-receipt sports. Ergo, some professor/coaches involved part time in my department, who also were attached primarily to intercollegiate athletics, a related unit on campus, were caught cheating in various ways with selected athletes on their teams (i.e., illegal funding, coaches “swapping grades”, etc.).

At this point, all of this disgusting mess was shifted peremptorily to the President’s Office, and—believe it or not—I as department head couldn’t even find out what was going on in regard to the status of these miscreants who were members of my own staff! Eventually
three of the coaches were fired, and the University was penalized somewhat by the Big Ten Conference. The local Champaign-Urbana community held a banquet on behalf of these men and even presented their wives with bejeweled watches! (I couldn’t believe it…) On top of this, there was also a subsequently aborted effort to have statues of the men created to be located prominently in a civic park! Egad!

(Note: I should explain that today faculty members in kinesiology/physical education units on these campuses are prone to correctly say: “We don’t have anything to do with them any more; they’re over there!)}

So, as a result of this type of a higher-administration, in—bondage situation, I bowed out of my administrative post and remained as a professor in the department. This in itself was very disappointing, because at the time our undergraduate and graduate academic programs were undoubtedly rated with the very best in the country. In addition, in the back of my mind there had been the possibility of my moving up from being department head to become dean of the College of Physical Education in the relatively near future. However, in 1971 I finally just “gave up” on Illinois—and America!—and decided to accept a position as dean of a new college (i.e., faculty) at The University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, Canada. There I knew the athletes in my (our) classes would be bona fide students and that inter-university athletics was grounded in a sound educational perspective.

America: The “Last Best Hope” on Earth? I have to say at this point—because my feelings will undoubtedly “break through” along the way in this literary effort—that I am most disturbed about what is happening in (or to) America. I believe that, as the world’s only superpower now, the U.S.A. is (and has been!) playing a negative role with its international efforts over the years—as well intentioned as it claims they are and may indeed have been in particular instances (World War II). I believe that this has happened because America has been “almost unconsciously” disintegrating within from the standpoint of human values. Somehow I just happened to have been born as a citizen of that country that was once supposed to be—as I said above—the “last best hope on earth.” Now the “last best hope” is that the rest of the world through the power and influence of a somehow-to-become, sound and influential United Nations will be able to persuade America to fulfill its avowed purpose and stay in its proper place as it does so. However, who’s willing to bet on that possibility with such an often “slanted” UN organization in place?

Finally, to summarize this preface, I am now “working my way along” in my 94th year. I am most happy personally because I am married to a wonderful person (Anne Rogers). We are living “the good life” in all respects. I do feel good intrinsically, also, about what I personally have been able to accomplish professionally and in a scholarly way. Nevertheless, (1) the field of physical activity education is still struggling in a variety of ways, and (2) excesses and malfeasance in both so-called educational sport and professional sport abound.

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Which “Character” Should Sport Develop?

In *A Way Out of Ethical Confusion* (Zeigler, 2004), I asked the question: “What character do we seek for people? I was referring to Commager’s 1966 list of 12 traits—i.e., “common denominators”—that can be attributed to Americans. In this list are many traits, some of which apply directly to the topic of sport’s relationship to character. These are self-confidence; materialism; complacency bordering occasionally on arrogance; cultivation of the competitive spirit; and indifference to, and exasperation with, laws, rules, and regulations (p. 7).

Functioning in a world that is steadily becoming a “Global Village,” we need to think more seriously than ever before about the character and traits for which we should seek to develop in people. The so-called developed nations can only continue to lead or strive for the proverbial good life if children and young people develop the right attitudes (psychologically speaking) toward (1) education, (2) work, (3) use of leisure, (4) participation in government, (5) various types of consumption, and (6) concern for world stability and peace. Make no mistake about it. If we truly desire “the good life,” education for the creative and constructive use of leisure—as a significant part of ongoing general education—should have a unique role to play from here on into the indeterminate future.

Viewed slightly differently, what are called the Old World countries all seem to have a “character”. It is almost something that they take for granted. However, it is questionable whether there is anything that can be called a character in North America (i.e., in the United States or in Canada). Americans were thought earlier to be heterogeneous and individualistic as a people, as opposed to Canadians. However, the Canadian culture—whatever that may be today (!)—moved or changed quite a bit in recent decades toward multiculturalism—not to mention French-speaking Quebec, of course—as people arrived from many different lands. (Of course, we must keep in mind that Canada was founded by two distinct cultures, the English and the French.)

Shortly after the middle of the twentieth century, Commager (1961), the noted historian, enumerated what he believed were some common denominators in American (i.e., U.S.) character. These, he said, were (1) carelessness; (2) openhandedness, generosity, and hospitality; (3) self-indulgence; (4) sentimentality, and even romanticism; (5) gregariousness; (6) materialism; (7) confidence and self-confidence; (8) complacency, bordering occasionally on arrogance; (9) cultivation of the competitive spirit; (10) indifference to, and exasperation with laws, rules, and regulations; (11) equalitarianism; and (12) resourcefulness (pp. 246-254).

What about Canadian character as opposed to what Commager stated above? To help us in this regard, several generations ago, Lipset (1973) made a perceptive comparison between the two countries. After stating that they probably resemble each other more than any other two countries in the world, he asserted that there seemed to be a rather “consistent pattern of differences between them” (p. 4). He found that certain “special differences” did exist and may be singled out as follows:

- Varying origins in their political systems and national identities, varying religious traditions, and varying frontier experiences. In general terms, the value orientations of
Canada stem from a counter-revolutionary past, a need to differentiate itself from the United States, the influence of monarchical institutions, a dominant Anglican religious tradition, and a less individualistic and more governmentally controlled expansion of the Canadian than of the American frontier (p. 5).

Actually, I believe that the situation in regard to character and the accompanying traits attributed to it has deteriorated even further by the end of the 20th century. In the dedication to my 2004 book titled *A Way Out of Ethical Confusion*, I stated: “I believe there is an urgent need to challenge the underlying human values and norms that have determined the direction that America is heading in the 21st century” (p. iii). This comment, if true, has significance in a search for an answer to the question of character.

**Which Traits Should Sport Develop?**

What “character” should sport develop—if any? Typically when an athlete or team at any level of sport is considered to have displayed character, the word “character” is associated with a host of values such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, perseverance, work ethic, and mental toughness. As a specific example, a high school athletic director defined an athlete of character as “a willingness to try no matter what the situation. An attempt to continually improve; a willingness to give all up for the cause; and sacrificing without expectations.” In another example, a high school coach asserted: “Character is the belief in self-worth and your own work ethic ...” (Rudd, 1999).

At the professional level in sport, character has been defined similarly and even more strongly. Consider a newspaper article that headlined, “The Arizona Diamondbacks Attribute Their Success to Character.” Specifically, the article praised the Diamondbacks as players who work hard and don’t complain about salaries (Heyman, 2000). Consider also an issue of *Sports Illustrated* in which a football player on the New England Patriots, Troy Brown, commented on former teammate Drew Bledsoe’s ability to play with a broken finger and lead his team to victory. Brown stated, “It showed a lot of character” (Zimmerman, 2001).

Yet, in contrast to the notion that an athlete of character is one who displays values such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, perseverance, work ethic, and mental toughness, sport scholars in the area of character development have often defined character with quite a different set of values. Sport scholars (e.g., sport philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists who write and theorize about character development in sport) more commonly define an athlete of character as one who is honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and compassionate (Arnold, 1999; Gough, 1998; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; Beller & Stoll, 1995). For example, Arnold (1999) stated, “In terms of moral goodness, or what I refer to as moral character, it involves a life that complies with such virtues as justice, honesty, and compassion.”

These responses are really puzzling. Why? They confuse us because it does indeed seem that there are two almost distinct definitions of character being promulgated by two very different camps. The first camp consists of promoters, coaches, administrators, and players who may typically define character with so-called social values such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and perseverance. What they develop in a player presumably could be designated as “social character.” The second camp consists of sport scholars, and a segment of people of earlier generations still alive, who typically define character with moral values such as honesty,
fairness, responsibility, compassion, and respect. This is commonly referred to by many of them as “moral character.” The existence of these two camps, each with their respective definitions of character, suggests that indeed there is confusion and disagreement concerning the definition of character in sport. (Of course, there may be some “in the middle” who accept an overlapping, possibly conflicting set of values to describe the term “character.”)

As a result of the above, the differences in the way character is defined may provide strong evidence why many feel there is a lack of sportsmanship in competitive sport today. Similarly, these same people decry the “winning at-all-cost” mentality that seems to prevail in athletics at all levels (see, for example, Hawes, 1998; Spencer, 1996; “A Purpose,” 1999). Many coaches, athletic administrators, and parents may indeed place such a premium on social values such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and work ethic that they forget, or at least downplay, any strong emphasis on the time-honored moral values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect.

With the above in mind, the purpose of this paper is to define and discuss in detail two types of character (moral and social) that are espoused by two distinct groups in the sport milieu. The first type has been called social character here. As sport becomes more professionalized, social character may now be more commonly fostered over the second type that is designated here as moral character. The ramifications of the “social character view” in sport are explained below. At the same time, what the author feels is the need for greater emphasis on the development of a “moral character view” in sport and physical activity education will also be discussed.

Social Character

To repeat in greater detail, if we consult our dictionaries for a definition of character, we will find descriptors such as “honesty, integrity, morals, and ethics.” These descriptors are consistent with the term “moral character”, a way in which most sport scholars still do define character. One would be hard pressed in this to find mention of so-called “social” values such as self-sacrifice, teamwork, loyalty, and perseverance. Yet, contrary to the classic dictionary definition, as well as what many sport scholars have proposed, the bulk of coaches, sport administrators, athletes, and parents in North American society today now seem to associate character more with these so-called social values rather than the fundamentally important moral values.

As one means of verifying how coaches define character, a sampling of high school physical educator/coaches were asked by Rudd to define the term “character.” Of the 38 coaches who responded, twenty-three primarily defined character in terms of work ethic, perseverance, teamwork, and commitment. For example, one coach stated, “Character is the belief in self-worth and your own work ethic. Understanding commitment and how that relates to long-term goals is strengthened by athletics” (Rudd, 1999). Another coach defined character in terms of mental toughness by stating:

“Character is a person’s ability to deal with in a productive manner, situations that arise during competition that involve a certain emotional intensity. A certain grace and strength are involved in dealing with what I refer to as artificial life/death situations: making the play to win the game, wanting to take the lost shot, etc.”.
In addition to coaches defining character largely with social values, note this article that contained the headline: “Character Paves Way for L-C.” The reference was to the Lewis-Clark State College baseball team after the team won the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) World Series. There was no mention of whether the team played honestly and fairly. Rather, the article highlighted the team’s ability come from behind to win and stressed how all team members contributed to the winning of the NAIA World Series (Browit, 1999).

Sport sociologists have also helped to explain why many may define character with social values like teamwork, work ethic, or loyalty as opposed to moral values such as honesty, fairness and responsibility. They maintain that there is a strong connection between the types of values that are cultivated in sport and what is valued in our American culture (Coakley, 1998; Edwards, 1973; Eitzen, 1999; Nixon, 1984; Sage 1988, 1998). Therefore, when considering the popular “sport builds character” creed, one must now comprehend the prevailing sport-context definition of character (i.e., in relationship to the current ideology of American culture). That is, basically, an ideology that is heavily based on a capitalistic economy and “mentality”. Within such an ideology, values such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and perseverance are the ones believed to be instrumental in maintaining the strong corporate and capitalistic nature of our country. Sport sociologists such as Berlage (1982), Coakley (1998), Sage (1988, 1998), and Shields & Bredemeier (1995) concur that sport is now used as a vehicle to foster corporate values among youth athlete participants. As a result, coaches, parents, and the general populace have come to view character in terms of values such as teamwork, loyalty, and self-sacrifice more than with moral values such as honesty, fairness, and responsibility.

Moral Character

Conversely, what is moral character? Originating with ancient philosopher, Aristotle, more than 2000 years ago, the concept of moral character is rooted in a perspective that states: “a moral person is one who—when choosing right from wrong—can apply a variety of moral values such as justice, honesty, compassion, respect, and responsibility” (Stoll & Beller, 1998b; Arnold, 1994, 1999; Gough, 1998; Lickona, 1991). Being a person of moral character means that a person is able to apply these moral values willingly, sincerely, and with understanding (Arnold, 1994, 1999; Lickona, 1991; Stoll & Beller, 1998b).

In other words, one must not simply have the ability to recognize dishonesty, or to know what it means to be dishonest, one must first understand and sincerely value the concept of honesty. Further, perhaps more importantly, this person must have the ability to act honestly when his or her peers are acting dishonestly (Stoll & Beller, 1998b). Stoll and Beller (1998b, Arnold, 1994, 1999; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995) have also posited that moral character is the ability to practice the moral values of honesty, justice, responsibility, and respect when no one is watching. This definition strongly supports the notion that a person who truly has moral character can apply a set of moral values with a strong understanding of its worth despite any surrounding peer pressures or societal pressures.

The reason why sport scholars define character from a moral perspective may be related to their field of study. For example, many sport philosophers relate particularly to moral
philosophy. Therefore, when defining character in the sport context, they are apt to apply an Aristotelian approach that relates sport to a moral ideal. (See, for example, Arnold, 1999; Beller & Stoll, 1995; Clifford & Feezell, 1997; Gough, 1998; Stoll & Beller, 1998a; Stoll & Beller, 1998b). Other sport scholars who have written about character development from a moral perspective sport psychologists who often define character from a moral position because of their background in moral psychology as it relates to moral development. For example, in their book titled: Character development and physical activity, Shields and Bredemeier (1995) defined character in terms of four virtues or values: (1) compassion, (2) fairness, (3) “sportspersonship”, and (4) integrity.

Still further, some sport sociologists who have written on character development in sport and physical activity are Sage (1998) and Coakley (1998). Sport sociologists apply a more “sociological view” to sport and are therefore inclined to discuss character from the perspective of society. That is, they describe how society (e.g., coaches, athletic administrators, and parents) defines and fosters character. As the reader will see in the following section, sport sociologists (and sport philosophers) have helped show that character can be defined more with social values rather than moral values.

Moral Character Versus Social Character: Assessing the Respective Values

As explained above, moral character is defined in terms of moral values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, compassion, and respect. Social character on the other hand is defined here by such social values such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, perseverance, and work ethic. A key point, then, to understanding the difference between moral character as opposed to social character is to seek to clarify still further the difference between moral values and social values.

According to Rokeach (1973), moral values can be distinguished from other types of values in that moral values are related to modes of behavior between people (i.e., an interpersonal focus). When these are violated, this may cause feelings of guilt and deep concern on the part of the individual who violated the particular moral value (e.g., being dishonest rather than honest, or irresponsible rather than responsible.

Additionally, Lumpkin, Stoll and Beller (1999) argue also that moral values are distinctive because they are the values that are critical to human relationships and to the upholding of morality. For example, a relationship in which person A is continually dishonest to person B will most likely lead to an unhealthy and dysfunctional relationship. Similarly, in a sport context, the maintaining of moral values such as honesty, fairness, and respect are vital to a fair and safe competition between opponents. If opponents intentionally cheat one another, the particular sport being played no longer exists as a fair competition. Such a situation should not (must not!) be permitted to continue. In this respect think of the burgeoning cheating problem in connection with substance abuse in sport all over the world.

However, similar to moral values, social values such as teamwork, loyalty, and self-sacrifice are also often involved in interpersonal relationships. However, the lack of upholding a particular social value such as self-sacrifice may not have what have been called “moral ramifications.” For example, it is difficult to consider an employee of a company immoral for
being unwilling to work extensively long hours. Nevertheless, a willingness to work beyond
normal business hours may be considered by the company as an indication of self-sacrifice
and a benefit to the company. In a similar vein, a baseball player who is commanded by his
coach to purposely “lean into” a pitch to reach first base by being hit, has not immorally
violated the rules of the game of baseball or brought harm to his teammates or opponents
by refusing to do so. Conversely, agreeing to be hit by a pitch to get on first base would
be considered a display of self-sacrifice by the player’s teammates. Yet it is most certainly a
questionable “maneuver” from a moral standpoint.

Social values may be defined as values that have been deemed by a society or culture
as being vital in reaching a desired end state. As it has developed in the American culture,
it appears that values such as teamwork, work ethic, and self-sacrifice are important in
maintaining our capitalist ideology in an accompanying democratic state. As it happens these
same values contribute to development of the ability to win in sport (Coakley, 1998; Sage,
1998; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). In contrast, moral values are not fostered to achieve a
specific goal in a particular context. Rather, the application of moral values such as honesty,
fairness, and responsibility are vital to human relationships in any context or culture (Lumpkin,
Stoll, & Beller, 1999).

In addition to distinguishing between moral and social character by their respective
values, moral and social character may also be differentiated by the reasoning process that
is used when one displays moral character versus social character. Thomas Lickona (1991),
an educator, and sport scholars such as Arnold (1999) and Stoll and Beller (1998b) maintain
that there is a thoughtful reasoning process that is linked to the notion of moral character. In
brief, this reasoning process involves three parts: knowing, valuing, and doing. A person who
acts with moral character does so because (1) he or she knows what is morally right; (2) he
values what is morally right; and (3) he is able to act on what he know and values. Thus, in a
sport context, an athlete is considered to have moral character if he or she (1) understands the
meaning of fair and honest play, (2) values fair and honest play, and (3) is able to play fairly
and honestly when perhaps others around him or her are playing unfairly.

Acting with moral character also means that the individual is able to identify a moral
situation and has the desire to act morally against other competing values and temptations
that may be immoral—and then does just that in an actual situation (Arnold, 1999). As a
specific example, consider a football player who appears to make a diving winning touchdown
catch in a championship game. The referee signals for a touchdown, but the player than tells
the referee that he did not catch the ball legally (i.e., that the ball hit the ground first). An
action such as this should be considered as a display of moral character. (Unfortunately, in
today’s world, many of his team members and opponents would think he was “crazy” for
having called the matter to the attention of the referee.)

In contrast to the reasoning process that is associated with moral character, acting with
what has been called social character does not necessarily involve a reasoning process in which
there has to be a knowing, valuing, and doing. Instead, the display of social character may
be out of a desire to conform, or as the result of a planned socialization process. In other
words, an athlete may be socialized into displaying social character and more specifically
self-sacrifice or teamwork because those are the types of values that are emphasized by
coaches, parents, and society in order win the game or be successful out in the corporate world (Arnold, 1999; Sage, 1998, 1988; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). An athlete may be said to act with social character then in response to the ethos of the team (and society too) rather than first considering thoughtfully what is morally right or wrong and without influence from teammates, coaches, parents, and others.

In sum, moral character and social character can be primarily distinguished by their respective values and the reasoning process (or lack of such) that is used to apply moral values versus social values in life situations. Moral character is linked to a thoughtful reasoning process that requires individuals to make difficult moral choices against other competing values—values that are defined here as social ones. As a result, acting with moral character may be considered noble and idealistic especially if it conflicts with certain social-character traits mentioned above.

Actualization of one or more social-character traits may not involve a thoughtful reasoning process. Rather, it may mean that the individual has conformed to what is almost automatically expected by the current ethos of American sports’ teams because of values held by American society in general that are debatable. Furthermore, a person not acting with so-called social character may not have moral ramifications. A case can be made readily that an unwillingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of the team is not the same as lying to one’s coach about eligibility or about the taking of drugs. It is obvious that there are gradations possible here when decision-making is required.

Social Character Versus Moral Character: Does An Imbalance Exist?

Judging by the continual occurrences of cheating and violence in sport by coaches, players, and parents, it may be reasonable to infer that the development of moral character is not receiving the needed attention (see, for example, Eitzen, 1999; Hawes, 1998; Dreyfuss, 2001; “A Purpose” 1999). Yet, despite the existing problems, many continue to assert that “sport builds character” (Docheff, 1998; Eitzen, 1999; Sage, 1988, 1998). The continuance of such claims may simply be the result of how character is defined along with the type of character that is valued by the average coach, parent, sport administrator or sports fan. As previously mentioned, those such as Sage (1998) and Coakley (1998) have maintained that sport has historically been viewed as a vehicle for developing values such as teamwork, self-sacrifice, loyalty, and work ethic which are believed to be instrumental in maintaining our corporate and capitalistic American ideology. This suggests that, down through the decades of the 20th century, our general society gradually determined that values or traits such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and work ethic are not only helpful in the “working world,” but they are also helpful in effecting winning in sport (O’Hanlon, 1980). It was inevitable that athletes, coaches, and administrators would understand the implications of this gradual acceptance of the superiority and importance of such values.

As a result of the similarity between prevailing societal values and what appears to be valued highest in sport now by the majority, it makes sense that character would typically be defined by many in relationship to so-called social values. (A better word than “social” is needed to describe these values). Further, it also may explain why social values are emphasized over moral values. In other words, many coaches, for example, believe that it is social values such as
teamwork, loyalty, and self-sacrifice that will maximize a team’s ability to win. ("Winning", increasingly, seems to be “what it’s all about”.) Hence, in a sport culture where present skill and competency give evidence of the potential future achievement of “gold, silver, and bronze”, athletes with such potential are increasingly provided with financial and moral support. All recognize that moral values such honesty, fairness, responsibility, and overall sportsmanship are “nice”, helpful, and “provide the icing on the cake.” However, if choices must be made, employing moral values will not be as helpful towards winning and being successful. Accordingly they “finish second” in people’s minds and eventually in actuality.

Coaches, sport administrators, and parents may possibly lack full awareness and true appreciation of what is typically called moral character. This may provide a second reason why so-called social character is emphasized over moral character. Considering that sport scholars such as sport philosophers, sport psychologists, and sport sociologists tend to publish articles in their own respective journals (e.g., sport philosophers publishing in the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*), it is logical to assume that most people in society simply do not read these journal articles. Therefore, the general population worldwide simply would not be knowledgeable and up-to-date on what has been written in recent decades about the development of moral character in the varieties of sport competition.

**Conclusion**

I have tried to explain initially here that, at the beginning of the 21st century, there are two quite distinct types of character traits that are being espoused, traits that lead the possessor to have different sport experiences. Granted there is some overlap; nevertheless, as a result there is now both confusion and disagreement about what constitutes desirable traits or character in sport. Many coaches, parents, sport administrators, and parents define character with values such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and perseverance that may be considered “social character.” Many sport scholars, on the other hand, tend to define moral character with values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, respect, and compassion.

Although values such as teamwork, loyalty, and self-sacrifice may be helpful towards winning, these values may not be enough towards helping athletes compete fairly, honestly, responsibly, and respectfully. For example, former Wichita State pitcher Ben Christens purposely threw at Anthony Moline who was 30 feet away from the plate (waiting on deck) because he felt Moline was trying to time his pitches. Christens hit Moline and severely injured his eye. As part of Christens’ response to the injury, he told reporters that the pitching coach taught him this tactic (“A Purpose,” 1999). Christens may be an athlete who is loyal to the team or cause (i.e., one who possesses social character), but it is argued here that he has a most inadequate conception of moral character.

Examples, such as the one with Christens, suggest that developing social character and a fierce desire to win is helpful to a point. However, in the final analysis, coaches, sport administrators, and parents need to consider character from a moral perspective as well. To do this means that more time and energy must be devoted to a more balanced approach, one that stresses the development of honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for opponents as well. This means that the concept of “character” must be more clearly defined and “targeted” pedagogically throughout the entire educational system. A first step in developing moral
character in sport may be simply to educate coaches, sport administrators, and parents about the difference between moral character and social character. Concurrently, many coaches, sport administrators, and parents need to understand that a more balanced emphasis between the two needs to be encouraged as part of the actual competitive-sport experience. However, the prevailing ethical confusion in North America needs to be resolved before leaders in physical activity education and educational sport can look forward to substantive progress on this important topic.

In Part II that follows, I will trace historically that “Civilization” got itself into this situation. Here the world is at the beginning of the 21st century with competitive sport “a bounding in all directions”. It has become a powerful social institution, but unfortunately it is “a basic social institution”, and we really don’t know what its contribution add up to…
PART II

Sport and Physical Activity’s Role in the “Adventure of Civilization”

Our thoughts turn to the “adventure of civilization” as Earth enters what is commonly termed “The 21st Century” (C.E.). However, any such pondering has certainly been colored by the way things have been going since September 11, 2001. Any reasonably enlightened person would be forced to admit that what we like to call “developing” civilization is truly an adventure into which we are being drawn inexorably! I base this opinion on the dictionary definition of the term as either an “exciting experience” or a “bold undertaking” (Encarta World English Dictionary, 1999, p. 23).

The “Adventure” of Civilization

In retrospect, the adventure of civilization began to make some headway because of now-identifiable forms of early striving which embodied elements of great creativity (e.g., the invention of the wheel, the harnessing of fire). The subsequent development in technology, very slowly but steadily, offered humans some surplus of material goods over and above that needed for daily living. For example, the early harnessing of nature created the irrigation systems of Sumeria and Egypt, and these accomplishments led to the establishment of the first cities. Here material surpluses were collected, managed, and sometimes squandered; nevertheless, necessary early accounting methods were created that were subsequently expanded in a way that introduced writing to the human scene. As we now know, the development of this form of communication in time helped humans expand their self-consciousness and to evolve gradually and steadily in all aspects of culture. For better or worse, however, the end result of this social and material progress has created a mixed agenda characterized by good and evil down to the present. The blanketing communications network of the world has now exceeded humankind’s ability to cope with it.

Muller (1952) concluded, “the adventure of civilization is necessarily inclusive” (p. 53). By that he meant that evil will probably always be with humankind to some degree, but it is civilization that sets the standards and accordingly works to eradicate at least the worst forms of such evil. Racial prejudice, for example, must be overcome. For better or worse, there are now more than six billion people on earth, and that number appears to be growing faster than the national debt! These earth creatures are black, yellow, brown, or white-skinned, but fundamentally we now know from genetic research that there is an “overwhelming oneness” in all humankind that we dare not forget in our overall planning (Huxley, 1957).

As various world evils are overcome, or at least held in check, scientific and accompanying technological development will be called upon increasingly to meet the demands of the exploding population. Gainful work and a reasonable amount of leisure will be required for further development. Unfortunately, the necessary leisure required for the many aspects of a broad, societal culture to develop fully, as well as for an individual to grow and develop similarly within it, has come slowly. The average person in the world is far from a full realization of such benefits. Why “the good life” for all has been so slow in arriving is not an easy question to answer. Of course, we might argue that times do change slowly, and that the possibility of increased leisure has really
come quite rapidly—once humans began to achieve some control of their environment.

**Naipaul or Huntington: “Universal Civilization or the Clash of Civilizations?”**

Naipaul (1990) had theorized that we are developing a “universal civilization” characterized by (1) the sharing of certain basic values, (2) what their societies have in common (e.g., cities and literacy), (3) certain of the attributes of Western civilization (e.g., market economies and political democracy), and (4) consumption patterns (e.g., fads) of Western civilization. Samuel Huntington (1998), the eminent political scientist, doesn’t see this happening, however, although he does see some merit in these arguments. He grants that Western civilization is different from any other civilization that has ever existed because of its marked impact on the whole world since 1500. However, he doesn’t know whether the West will be able to reverse the signs of decay already present and thus renew itself.

Sadly, there have been innumerable wars throughout history with very little if any let-up down to the present. Nothing is so devastating to a country’s economy as war. Now, whether we like it or not, the world is gradually sliding into what Huntington has designated as “the clash of civilizations.” Some people have seized upon his analysis as a justification for the United States to move still further in the War on Terrorism by the installation of what has euphemistically been called a “modernized regime” in Iraq. It is argued that this “accomplishment” would help toward the gradual achievement of worldwide democratic values along with global capitalism and so-called free markets.

*The Misreading of Huntington’s Thought.* This misreading of Huntington’s thought, however, needs to be corrected. As it stands, he asserts, “Western belief in the universality of Western culture suffers three problems. ...It is false; it is immoral; and it is dangerous” (p. 310). He believes strongly that these religion-based cultures, such as the Islamic and the Chinese, should be permitted to find their own way in the 21st century. In fact, they will probably do so anyhow, no matter what the West does. Then individually (hopefully not together!), they will probably each become superpowers themselves. The “unknown quality” of their future goals will undoubtedly fuel the desires of those anxious for the United States to maintain overwhelming military superiority along with continually expanding technological capability.

While this is going on, however, the United States needs to be more aware of its own internal difficulties. It has never solved its “inner-city problem,” along with increases in antisocial behavior generally (i.e., crime, drugs, and violence). Certainly the decay of the traditional family has long-term implications as well. Huntington refers further to a “general weakening of the work ethic and rise of a cult of personal indulgence (p. 304). Still further, there is a definite decline in learning and intellectual activity as indicated by lower levels of academic achievement creating a need for course grade “aggrandizement” (i.e., the gentleman’s “C” is “history”). Finally, there has been a marked lessening of “social capital” (the amount of volunteering including personal trust in others to meet individual needs).

*Schlesinger’s Analysis of America.* These conflicting postulations by Huntington and Naipaul are stated here merely to warn that the present “missionary culture” of the United States is, in many ways, not really a true culture anyhow. So states Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (1998), the distinguished
historian. He points out that in recent years the U.S.A. has gradually acquired an ever-increasing multi-ethnicity. In his The disuniting of America, he decries the present schisms occurring in the United States. He is most concerned that the melting pot concept formerly so prominent in the States is becoming a “Tower of Babel” concept—just like Canada!

He understands, however: “Canadians have never developed a strong sense of what it is to be a Canadian” by virtue of their dual heritage (p. 17). Huntington explains further that an attempt to export democratic and capitalistic values vigorously to the world’s other cultures may be exactly the wrong approach. He believes that they may well be looking mainly for stability in their own traditions and identity. (Japan, for example, has shown the world that it’s possible to become “rich and modern” without giving up their illiberal “core identity.”) Struggle as all cultures do for renewal when internal decay sets in, no civilization has proven that it is invincible indefinitely. This is exactly why Muller characterized history as somehow being imbued with a “tragic sense.”

The “Tragic Sense” of Life (Muller)

This “tragic sense” that history has displayed consistently was described by Herbert Muller (1952), in his magnificent treatise titled The uses of the past. Muller disagrees with the philosopher Hobbes (1588-1679), however, who stated in his De Homine that very early humans existed in an individual state of nature in which life was anarchic and basically “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” Muller argued in rebuttal that life “might have been poor and short, but that it was never solitary or simply brutish” (p. 6).

Accordingly, Muller’s approach to history was in the spirit of the great tragic poets, a spirit of reverence and/or irony. It is based on the assumption that the tragic sense of life is not only the profoundest, but also the most pertinent for an understanding of both past and present (p. viii).

Muller believed that the drama of human history has been characterized up to now by high tragedy in the Aristotelian sense. As he stated, “all the mighty civilizations have fallen because of tragic flaws; as we are enthralled by any golden age we must always add that it did not last, it did not do” (p. viii). This brings to mind that conceivably the twentieth century of the modern era may turn out to have been the “Golden Age” of the United States. As unrealistic as this may sound because I am talking about what today is the most powerful nation in the history of life on Earth, there are also many misgivings developing about the blind optimism concerning history’s malleability and compatibility in keeping with American ideals.

“The future as history.” More than a generation ago, Heilbroner (1960) arrived at this position similarly. He explained in his “future as history” concept that America’s belief in a personal “deity of history” may be short-lived in the 21st century. As he stated this, he emphasized the need to search for a greatly improved “common denominator of values” (p. 170) in the face of technological, political, and economic forces that are “bringing about a closing of our historic future.” As the world turns today in 2013, you may laugh at this prediction. Yet, looking at the situation from a starkly different perspective even earlier, Arnold Toynbee (1947) came to a quite similar conclusion in his monumental A study of history from still another standpoint. He theorized that humankind must return to the one true God from
whom it has gradually but steadily fallen away. You can challenge him on this opinion, as I (an agnostic) most assuredly do. Yet, no matter—the ways things are going at present—we on the Earth had best try to use our heads as intelligently and wisely as possible. As we get on with striving to make the world as effective, efficient, and humane as possible, we need to make life as replete with Good, as opposed to Evil, as we possibly can. With this plea for an abundance of righteousness, you may no longer be wondering where this analysis is heading. Let us turn now to what I have termed “the plight” of sport management.

The “Plight” of Sport Management

At this point, having placed the “adventure of civilization” in some perspective, I will now shift my focus to sport and related physical activity. Here is a societal institution that became an ever-more powerful social force in the 20th century. In this study I am attempting to analyze philosophically and sociologically what I have called reluctantly the “plight” of sport management. Basically I am arguing that society is governed by strong, fundamental social forces or institutions. Among those social institutions are (1) the values (and accompanying norms devised), (2) the type of political state in vogue, (3) the prevailing economic system, (4) the religious beliefs or system present, etc. To these longstanding institutions I have added the influence of such other forces as education, science and technological advancement, concern for peace, and now sport itself. (Zeigler, 2010, Part IIb) Of these, the values, and the accompanying norms that are developed, form the strongest social institution of all.

Crossing the Postmodern Divide.

Whether we all recognize it or not, similar to all other professions today, the burgeoning sport management profession is presently striving to cross what has been termed the postmodern divide. An epoch in civilization approaches closure when many of the fundamental convictions of its advocates are challenged by a substantive minority of the populace. It can be argued that indeed the world is moving into a new epoch as the proponents of postmodernism have been affirming over recent decades. Within such a milieu there are strong indications that sport management is going to have great difficulty crossing this chasm, this so-called, postmodern divide.

A diverse group of postmodern scholars argues that many in democracies, under girded by the various rights being propounded (e.g., individual freedom, privacy), have come to believe that now they too require—and deserve!—a supportive “liberal consensus” within their respective societies. Conservative, essentialist elements prevail at present and are functioning strongly in many Western political systems. With their more authoritative orientation in mind, conservatives believe that the deeper foundation justifying this claim of a need for a more liberal consensus has never been fully rationalized. However, postmodernists now form a substantive minority that supports a more humanistic, pragmatic, liberal consensus in which highly competitive sport is viewed as an increasingly negative influence on society. If this statement is true—there are strong indications that the present sport management profession—as known today—will have difficulty crossing this post-modern divide that has been postulated.

Characterizations of Competitive Sport

Having stated that “sport” has become a strong social force or institution, it is true also that there has been some ambiguity about what such a simple word means. In an earlier study
I recall uncovering that the word “sport” was used in 13 different ways as a noun. Somehow this number has increased to 14 in the most recent Encarta World English Dictionary (1999) (p. 1730). In essence, what we are describing here is an athletic activity requiring skill or physical prowess. It is typically of a competitive nature as in racing, wrestling, baseball, tennis, or cricket. For the people involved, sport is often serious, and participants may even advance to a stage where competitive sport becomes a semi-professional or a professional career choice. For a multitude of others, however, sport is seen more as a diversion, as recreational in nature, and as a pleasant pastime.

**A Social Institution Without an Underlying Theory.** Viewed collectively, I am now arguing that at present the “totality” of sport appears to have become a strong social institution—but one that is without a well-defined theory. This fact is being recognized increasingly. Yet, at this point the general public, including most politicians, seems to believe that “the more competitive sport we have, the merrier!” I believe, however, that we in the sport management profession need right now to answer such questions as (1) what purposes competitive sport has served in the past, (2) what functions it is fulfilling now, (3) where it seems to be heading, and (4) how it should be employed to serve all humankind.

**How Sport Serves Society.** In response to these questions, without very careful delineation at this point, I believe that sport as presently operative can be subsumed in a non-inclusive list as possibly serving in the following ways:

1. As an organized religion (for those with or without another similar competing affiliation)
2. As an exercise medium (often a sporadic one)
3. As a life-enhancer or “arouser” (puts excitement in life)
4. As a trade or profession (depending upon one’s approach to it)
5. As an avocation, perhaps as a “leisure-filler” (at either a passive, vicarious, or active level)
6. As a training ground for war (used throughout history for this purpose)
7. As a “socializing activity” (an activity where one can meet and enjoy friends)
8. As an educational means (i.e., the development of positive character traits, however described)

As I review the list developed above, I find it most interesting that I didn’t list “sport as a developer of positive character traits” until last! I wonder why…

My listing could undoubtedly be larger. I could have used such terms as (1) sport “the destroyer,” (2) sport “the redeemer,” (3) sport “the social institution being tempted by science and technology,” (4) sport “the social phenomenon by which heroes and villains are created,” or, finally, (5) sport “the social institution that has survived within an era characterized by a vacuum of belief for many.” But I must stop. I believe this listing is sufficient to make the necessary point in the present discussion.

I am hoping that you agree that sport managers truly need to understand what competitive sport has become in society, as well as why many of its promoters are confronted with a dilemma that most don’t even recognize. I assert this since I believe that sport, also, as is happening with all other social institutions, is inevitably being confronted by the postmodern divide that id steadily being created. In crossing this frontier, many troubling and difficult decisions, often
ethical in nature, will have to be made as the professor of sport management, for example, seeks to prepare prospective professionals who will guide sport and related physical activity into becoming a responsible social institution. The fundamental question facing the profession is: “What kind of sport and physical activity do we want to promote to help shape what sort of world as we look ahead in the 21st century?”

Is Sport Fulfilling Its Presumed Educational and Recreational Roles Adequately?

What implications does all of this have for sport as it moves along in the 21st century? I believe that there are strong indications that sport’s presumed educational and recreational roles in the “adventure” of civilization are not being fulfilled adequately. Frankly, the way commercialized, over-emphasized sport has been managed it can be added to the list of symptoms of American internal decay enumerated above (e.g., drugs, violence, decline of intellectual interest, dishonesty, greed). If true, this inadequacy inevitably throws a burden on sport management as a profession to do something about it. Sport, along with all of humankind, is facing the postmodern divide.

Reviewing this claim in some detail. Depauw (Quest, 1997) argued that society should demonstrate more concern for those who have traditionally been marginalized in society by the sport establishment (i.e., those excluded because of sex or “physicality”). She spoke of “The (In)Visibility of DisAbility” in our culture. Depauw’s position is backed substantively by what Blinde and McCallister (1999) call “The Intersection of Gender and Disability Dynamics.”

A second point of contention about sport’s contribution relates to the actual “sport experience.” The way much sport has been conducted, we have every right to ask, “Does sport build character or ‘characters’?” Kavussannu & Roberts (Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 2001) recently showed that, even though “sport participation is widely regarded as an important opportunity for character development,” it is also true that sport “occurs in a context that values ego orientation (e.g. winning IS the most important thing).”

Sport’s Contribution Today. What is competitive sport’s contribution today? If we were to delve into this matter seriously, we might be surprised—or perhaps not. We may well learn that sport is contributing significantly in the development of what are regarded as the social values—that is, the values of teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and perseverance consonant with prevailing corporate capitalism in democracy and in other political systems as well. Conversely, however, we will also discover that there is now a great deal of evidence that sport may be developing an ideal that opposes the fundamental moral virtues of honesty, fairness, and responsibility in the innumerable competitive experiences provided (Lumpkin, Stoll, and Beller, 1999).

Significant to this discussion are the results of investigations carried out by Hahm, Stoll, Beller, Rudd, and others in recent years. The Hahm-Beller Choice Inventory (HBVCI) has now been administered to athletes at different levels in a variety of venues. It demonstrates conclusively that athletes will not support what is considered “the moral ideal” in competition. As Stoll and Beller (1998) saw it, for example, an athlete with moral character demonstrates the moral character traits of honesty, fair play, respect, and responsibility whether an official is present to enforce the rules or not. This finding was further substantiated by Priest, Krause,
and Beach (1999) who reported that their findings in the four-year changes in college athlete’s ethical value choices were consistent with other investigations. They showed decreases in “sportsmanship orientation” and an increase in “professional” attitudes associated with sport.

On the other hand, even though dictionaries define social character similarly, sport practitioners, including participants, coaches, parents, and officials, have come to believe that character is defined properly by such values as self-sacrifice, teamwork, loyalty, and perseverance. The common expression in competitive sport is: “He/she showed character”. This means that “He/she ‘hung in there’ to the bitter end!” […whatever]. Rudd (1999) confirmed that coaches explained character as “work ethic and commitment.” This coincides with what sport sociologists have found. Sage (1998, p. 614) explained: “Mottoes and slogans such as ‘sports builds character’ must be seen in the light of their ideological issues” In other words, competitive sport is structured by the nature of the society in which it occurs. This would appear to mean that over-commercialization, drug-taking, cheating, bribe-taking by officials, violence, etc. at all levels of sport are simply reflections of the culture in which we live. So much for sport’s presumed relationship with moral character development.

At this point, we can’t help but recall that the ancient Olympic Games became so excessive with its ills that they were abolished. They were begun again only by the spark provided in the late 19th century by de Coubertin’s “noble amateur ideal.” The way things are going today, it is not unthinkable that the steadily increasing excesses of the present Olympic Games Movement could well bring about their demise again. (Russia is purported to have spent 58 billion dollars on the 2014 Winter Games, more than was spent on all previous such Games, and Canada, for example, spent 58 million dollars on its “Own the Podium program.”) However, they are only symptomatic of a larger problem confronting an American culture. Despite its claims to be “the last best hope on earth,” American culture appears to be facing what Berman (2000) calls “spiritual death” (p. 52). He makes this claim because of “its crumbling school systems and widespread functional illiteracy, violent crime and gross economic inequality, and apathy and cynicism.”

This discussion about whether sport’s presumed educational and recreational roles have justification in fact could go on indefinitely. So many negative incidents have occurred that one hardly knows where to turn to avoid further negative examples. On the one hand we read the almost unbelievably high standards set in the Code of Conduct developed by the Coaches Council of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) (2001); yet, conversely we learn that today athletes’ concern for the presence of moral values in sport declines over the course of a university career (Priest, Krause, and Beach, 1999).

Sedentary Living Has Caught Up With Us. With this as a backdrop, we learn further that Americans, for example, are increasingly facing the cost and consequences of sedentary living (Booth & Chakravarthy, 2002). Additionally, Malina (2001) tells us that there is a need to track people’s physical activity across their life spans. Finally, Corbin and Pangrazi (2001) explain that we haven’t yet been able to devise and accept a uniform definition of wellness for all people. The one thought that emerges from these various assessments is as follows: We give every evidence of wanting our “sport spectaculars” for the few much more than we want all people of all ages and all conditions to have meaningful sport and exercise involvements throughout their lives.
Having made this statement, I report further that Tibbetts (2002) in Canada, for example, described an *Environics* survey that explained that “65% of Canadians would like more government money spent on local arenas, playgrounds, and swimming pools, as well as on sports for women, the poor, the disabled, and aboriginals.” At the same time, Dr. Ayotte, director of the only International Olympic Committee-accredited testing laboratory in Canada, explains that young athletes believe you must take drugs to compete successfully. “People have no faith in hard work and food now,” she says, to achieve success in sport (Long, 2001).

**Official Sport’s Response to the Prevailing Situation**

So what do we find that “sport officialdom” is saying about this situation? Answers to this question are just about everywhere as we think, for example, of the various types of scandals tied to both the summer and winter Olympic Games. For example, at the turn of the century the *Vancouver Province* (2000) reported that the former “drug czar” of the U.S. Olympic Team, Dr. Wade Exum, had charged that half of the team used performance-enhancing drugs to prepare for the 1996 Games. After making this statement, the response was rapid: he was forced to resign! He then sued the United States Olympic Committee for racial discrimination and harassment.

Viewed in a different perspective, as reported by David Wallis (2002), Dr. Vince Zuaro, a longtime rules interpreter for Olympic wrestling, said recently: “Sports are so political. If you think what happened with Enron is political, [try] Olympic officiating… Every time there’s judging involved, there’s going to be a payoff.” Further, writing about the credibility of the International Olympic Committee, Feschuk (2002) stated in an article titled “Night of the Olympic Dead”: “The IOC has for so long been inflicting upon itself such severe ethical trauma that its survival can only be explained by the fact that it has passed over into the undead. Its lifeless members shuffle across the globe in a zombie-like stupor, one hand extended to receive gratuities, the other held up in exaggerated outrage to deny any accusations of corruption.”

*Dick Pound’s Reward for Distinguished Service.* Closing out reference to the Olympic Games Movement, recall the case of Dick Pound, the Canadian lawyer from Montreal, who had faithfully and loyally striven most successfully to bolster the Games’ finances in recent decades. He had also taken on the assignment of monitoring the situation with drugs and doping, as well as the bribery scandal associated with the Games held in Salt Lake City. In the race to succeed retiring President Samaranch, Pound unbelievably finished in third place immediately behind a man caught in a bribery scandal just a short time earlier. Just punish “the messenger”…

Finally, in the realm of international sport, Dr. Hans B. Skaset (2002), a Norwegian professor, is set to make a prediction at a conference on drugs in sport scheduled for November, 2002. He will predict as keynote speaker:

“Top international sport will cut itself free from its historical values and norms. After working with a clear moral basis for many years, sport by 2008-2010 will continue to be accepted as a leading genre within popular culture—but not, as it was formerly, a model for health, fairness, and honorable conduct…”

Switching venues, you still don’t see the hockey promoters doing anything to really curb the Neanderthal antics of professional hockey players. Or considering professional sport
generally, note the view of sport sociologist, Steven Ortiz, who has found in his study that “there clearly seems to be a ‘fast-food sex’ mentality among professional athletes” (Cryderman, 2001). In addition, in the realm of higher education, Canadian universities are gradually moving toward the athletic-scholarship approach that certain universities in the East and Midwest sections of Canada have been following for years illegally (Naylor, 2002)! In September, 2001, a Halifax, Nova Scotia team (the St. Mary Huskies) beat Mount Allison’s, New Brunswick’s football team by a score of 105-0. In this article, one of a series sponsored by *The Globe and Mail (Toronto)*, various aspects of this disturbing development were considered. Interestingly, this is just “penny-ante” compared to the financial practices of various upper-division university conferences in the United States.

**Concluding Statement**

You may think that I am being unduly pessimistic and have reached the “old-curmudgeon” stage. This may be partially true, but I urge all sport and physical activity managers to adhere to their stated and approved purpose more carefully than you are doing at present. I urge you additionally to seek the answer to two fundamental questions.

(Note: The response to the first question might well cause action to be taken in the near future to answer question #2.)

These questions are: (1) in what ways can we accurately assess the present status of sport to learn if it is—or is not—fulfilling its role as a presumably beneficent social institution?, and (2)—depending on the answer to #1, of course—will you then have the motivation and professional zeal to do your utmost to help sport achieve what could well be its rightful place in society? I believe sport and related physical activity—broadly interpreted—can indeed be a worthwhile social institution contributing to the wellbeing and health of people of all ages and conditions? In Part III following I will attempt to make the case for most careful consideration of the function of values in society in relation to the value attached to physical activity education throughout history down to the present.
PART III

Fostering Physical Activity Values

Throughout my entire professional life, I have argued that your values, my values, our values, the world’s values are literally “what it’s all about”! However, as I have discovered in trying to get this message across to students, there is typically so much confusion about the subject of values at all levels. That is what is so discouraging. Yet, as I have finally appreciated, the fact that there is confusion occurs because of the complexity of the topic. In Part III I will attempt to summarize discussion about this all-important topic.

The “What Are Humans?” Discussion

Initially, I decided not to take the discussion back to the very beginning of the universe and seek to explain its beginning and inconceivable enormity. Instead I will simply ask you to go to your computer and then “google” “The Universe”. Then please watch the 10-minute video that typically appears on the first page of items appearing on your screen.

Next I will ask you to distinguish what has often been called “the adventure of civilization” while appreciating that the beginnings of the first civilization on Earth was only about 10,000 years ago. Subsequently, humans learned to acquire knowledge (e.g., sensing) along with the four “historical revolutions” that have occurred in the development of the world’s “communication capability” (e.g., writing).

The please try to delineate the various “historical images” that have been created during your life experience seeking to describe what the essence of the individual is as he/she sought to cope with the surrounding environment (e.g., the human as a “rational animal”). I learned that there have been seven rival theories about human nature as postulated by the insightful work of Leslie Stevenson (1987). Each of these prognostications was saying in essence: This is “the hand that humans have been dealt,” and “this is how they can best react to it what such a finding is telling them” The Christian view of the human, for example, is only one, a view stating that the nature of man is characterized as a creature made in the image of God and that this “creature” is destined to have control of the rest of God’s creation.

A starkly different view of the human was offered by Konrad Lorenz’s “innate aggression” theory about human nature. He argued that the happenings of early childhood are basic to a person’s subsequent philosophical and later scientific development. His assumption was that the instinctual behavior patterns of a particular species occurred as a result of the individual’s genes evolving down through the ages. Hence it is easy to understand why Darwin’s Origin of Species (1859) caused such a furor when the human’s evolution through so-called natural selection was propounded. “The world” has not been the same since this strong contradiction of Christian doctrine.

To this point we as humans knew that we were organisms, living creatures, who have reached a stage of development where we “know that something has happened, is continuing to happen, and will evidently continue to happen.” However, underlying this statement I can acknowledge that I was searching for the answers to two historical questions: First, did humans in earlier times, equipped with their coalescing genes and evolving memes, enjoy
to any significant degree what discerning people today might define as “quality living?” Second, I wondered whether earlier humans had any opportunity for freely chosen, beneficial physical activity in sport, exercise, play, and dance that was of sufficient quality and quantity to contribute to the quality of life.

Of course, I appreciated that asking a question about the quality of life in earlier times is difficult, because we appreciate that present-day humans can’t be both judge and jury in such a debate. On what basis can we decide, for example, whether any social progress has indeed been made such that would permit resolution of such a concept as “quality living” including a modicum of “ideal sport competition” or “purposeful physical activity and related health education.”?

There has been progression, of course, but how can we assume that change is indeed progress? It may be acceptable as a human criterion of progress to say that we are coming closer to approximating the good and the solid accomplishments that we think humans should have achieved both including what might be termed “the finest type” of sport competition.

One realizes immediately, also, that any assessment of the quality of life in prerecorded history, including the possible role of physical activity, including sport in that experience, must be a dubious evaluation at best. However, I was intrigued by the work of Herbert Muller who has written so insightfully about the struggle for freedom in human history. I was impressed, also, by his belief that recorded history has displayed a “tragic sense” of life. Whereas the philosopher Hobbes (1588-1679) stated in his De Homine that very early humans existed in an anarchically individualistic state of nature in which life was “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short,” Muller (1961) argued in rebuttal that it “might have been poor and short enough, but that it was never solitary or simply brutish” (p. 6).

Accordingly, Muller’s approach to history is “in the spirit of the great tragic poets, a spirit of reverence and or irony, and is based on the assumption that the tragic sense of life is not only the profoundest but the most pertinent for an understanding of both past and present” (1952, p. vii). The rationalization for his “tragic” view is simply that the drama of human history has truly been characterized by high tragedy in the Aristotelian sense. As he states, “All the mighty civilizations of the past have fallen, because of tragic flaws; as we are enthralled by any Golden Age we must always add that it did not last, it did not do” (p. vii).

This made me wonder whether the 20th century of the modern era might turn out to be the Golden Age of America. This may be true because so many misgivings are developing about former blind optimism concerning history’s malleability and compatibility in keeping with American ideals. As Heilbroner (1960) explained in his ‘future as history’ concept, America’s still-prevalent belief in a personal “deity of history” may be short-lived in the twenty-first century. Arguing that technological, political, and economic forces are “bringing about a closing of our historic future,” he emphasized the need to search for a greatly improved “common denominator of values” (p. 178).

However, all of this could be an oversimplification, because the concept of ‘civilization’ is literally a relative newcomer on the world scene. At present we can never forget for a moment that previous human civilizations were not miraculously saved! Literally, not one has made it! Hence, “Man errs, but strive he must,” admonished Goethe, and we as world citizens today dare not forget that dictum.
What Are the Values Held by Humans?

Recall that axiology (the study of values) is the fourth subdivision of the discipline of philosophy and is (presumably!) the end result of philosophizing. The individual should strive to develop a system of values reasonably consistent with his or her beliefs in the other three subdivisions as well: metaphysics (or inquiry about the nature of reality); epistemology (or the study of knowledge acquisition); and logic (or the exact relating of ideas).

Values are principles or standards of behavior that people consider to be important or beneficial. They are basic and are an integral part of every culture. A person is a member of a culture and typically holds beliefs and assumptions about it and the world in which it functions.

The values people hold convey to others what is good and important in their lives. Accordingly, the defensible ethical decisions people make require a wise choice of values. However, even though humankind has won a recognizable semblance of victory over what is often a harsh physical environment, it is true that many people have not been able to remove much of the social insecurity that plagues their lives.

In addition, there is still no non-controversial foundation on which the entire structure of ethics can be built. Hence, as life becomes ever more complex in the early 21st century, there are at least eight major ethical routes to decision-making about values extant in what we call the Western world (Graham, 2004).

A basic question arises: Are values objective or subjective—that is, do values exist whether a person is present to realize them or not? Or is it merely people who ascribe value to the various relationships they have with others—and possibly also with their physical environment? In addition, if a value exists in and for itself, it is said to be an intrinsic value. One that serves as a means to an end, however, has become known as an instrumental or extrinsic value.

In the past, moral philosophers offered general guidance as to what to do, what to seek, and how to treat others—injunctions that we should be fully aware of even today. As a rule, however, philosophers have not tried to preach to their adherents in the same way that theologians have felt constrained to do. The earlier moral philosophers did, however, offer practical advice that included a great variety of pronouncements about what was good and bad, or right and wrong in human life.

Today it makes good sense that, with problems, conflicts and strife existing at all levels of society, a person should strive to get to the heart of this vital matter for the sake of his or her future. Unfortunately, the child and adolescent in what we call modern society are missing out almost completely on a sound “experiential” introduction to ethics. This has created what may be called an “ethical decision-making dilemma.” Frankly, it is a crisis and represents a condemnation of present society!

The question is “What to do about this lack?” Where can one go from almost “inherent confusion” that exists in so many lives? The strategy being proposed here for improving this situation is that people should (1) list what they believe our values are in light of the changing times. Then—possibly in discussion with those who are closest to them—they should (2) rearrange and restate them in some type of graduated or hierarchical order.

Thereafter, finally, they will (3) need to assess more carefully—on a regular basis—whether they are living up to those values they have chosen, the values they so often glibly
espouse whenever the occasion arises. This bold assertion makes good sense whether reference is being made to what takes place with a person and his or her family in the home, the school, the church, or in the everyday world.

**The Value/Ethics Relationship**

In the discipline of philosophy the term “value” is equivalent to the concepts of “worth” and “goodness”. It is helpful, however, to draw a distinction between two kinds of value: (1) intrinsic value = human experience good or valuable in itself, an end for its own sake, and (2) extrinsic value = an experience about goodness or value similarly, while serving as a means to achieve some purpose or material gain.

Ethics is termed a speculative subdivision of philosophy that treats the question of values. (Axiology is the technical name for the actual study of values.) It has to do with morality, conduct, good, evil, and the ultimate objectives of life. As it has developed, there was an ongoing need for people to define values still further in human life. So now there are specialized philosophies of religion, education, art, and even of sport and physical activity education.

After the ancient Greeks, ethical thought was oriented more to practice than to theory. Also, the meanings of ethical terms and concepts did not change appreciably until marked social change occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At that point it was argued for the first time that ethics should be contrasted with science because the latter was presumably ethically neutral (i.e., value free).

Thereafter, in the Western world at least, a continuing struggle began between advocates of philosophical utilitarianism and those espousing idealism (i.e., the attempt to distinguish between naturalistic ethics and so-called moral law prescribed by some power greater than humans). This struggle has continued to the present day with no firm evidence that it will abate in the near future.

**A Persistent Problem for Humankind: Value Choice**

Through the history of humankind, value choice became a persistent problem. If it is accepted that the values held by people in any particular era are so important, it holds also that the determination of “what is important” has been a “persistent problem” historically for humankind. If an individual or group sought to deviate from what the majority in a society felt about what was important or necessary, a crossroad or crisis in life presented itself. Then, depending on how serious such a problem became, the individual (or group) faced a decision that was either an ethical issue or a legal matter—or both. The society itself determined ultimately what such an “infraction of the rules” was to be called.

Further, as societies evolved, rapidly or slowly, there was greater or lesser confusion about the subject of ethics. The result seems to have been that—instead of having an impossible ideal confronting the practical necessity of daily life—now a vastly diverse inheritance of ethical ways exists. No matter which ethical way of life one chooses, the others “available” are at least to some degree betrayed. This confusion has been exacerbated because of the complex of ethical systems that the West has inherited (i.e., Hebraic, Christian, Renaissance, Industrial—and now Islam has been added to the mix!).

What might be termed this “philosophic/religious confusion” has historically and
inevitably carried over into all aspects of life. Also, it is probably impossible to gain objectivity and true historical perspective on the rapid change that is taking place. Nevertheless, an unprecedented burden of increasing complexity has been imposed on people’s understanding of themselves and their world. Many leaders, along with the rest of the population, must certainly be wondering whether the whole affair can be managed.

Down through the 20th century, idealism and realism, followed by pragmatism, were the leading philosophical “stances” in the Western world. However, for some scholars what became known as analytic philosophy emanating from England was gradually superseding the “leading stances” in North America.

However, sound theory is available to humankind through the application of scientific method to problem-solving. So, in such a case, what then is the exact nature of philosophy? Who is really in a position to answer the ultimate questions about the nature of reality? The scientist is, of course. Accordingly, the philosopher must therefore become the servant of science by the employment of conceptual analysis and rational reconstruction of language to help science along. The philosopher has no choice but to be resigned to dealing with important—but lesser—questions than the origin of the universe, the nature of the human being, and resultant implications for the everyday conduct of this species.

If, therefore, only science and mathematics provide reliable knowledge, philosophy could well then be defined as logical or linguistic analysis. The task of the philosopher accordingly becomes logical or linguistic analysis: the clarification of the meanings of scientific statements. Hence, interestingly, neither subjectivism nor utilitarianism is the answer either. The former, subjectivism, defined as “feelings of approval,” is an untenable position to base one’s future on. The latter, utilitarianism, also tends to look into the psychological state of happiness or pleasure possibly felt by the acceptance of a recommendation of a specific ethical decision.

As the Western world moves along in the 21st Century, the matter of values, ethics, and decision-making is more complex than ever. Graham, in his *Eight theories of ethics* (2004), pointed out that many who seek to enter philosophy’s domain are disappointed when they discover that questions about good, evil, and the meaning of life are not answered. Since philosophy’s current direction is not so inclined, seeking to ameliorate this dilemma, Graham suggested eight theories of, or approaches to, ethics that he views as having stood the test of time. They are (1) egoism, (2) hedonism, (3) naturalism & virtue theory, (4) existentialism, (5) Kantianism, (6) utilitarianism, (7) contractualism, and (8) religion.

How Humans Choose Values

Hunter Lewis gives us help at this point, help that I wish I had had earlier, back when I was trying to respond to that “dear lady’s” request to state “the human values in recreation” early in my career. In his outstanding treatment of the subject of human values (1990), Lewis stated that there are six ways that people choose the values they hold:

1. Authority (or “I have faith in the authority of...”)
2. Deductive Logic (“Since A is true, B must be true. because B follows from A”)
3. Sense Experience (“I know it’s true because I saw it, I heard it, I tasted it, I smelled it, or I touched it myself.”)
4. Emotion (“I feel that this is true.”)
5. Intuition (“After struggling with this problem all day, I went to bed confused and exhausted. The next morning, as I awakened, the solution came to me in a flash—and I just knew it was true.”)

6. “Science” (“I tested the hypothesis experimentally and found that it was true.”)

This listing does seem to “cover the waterfront” insofar as individual decision-making is concerned. But then I realize that when to apply which approach is another matter. In addition, I believe there are actually three categories into which these values may be divided: First, those which are personal in the sense that they relate to our immediate relations with family and friends—and our everyday life in society functioning under this or that social or political system. Secondly, as we become professionals in some field of endeavor, we should also explicitly determine our professional value orientation as a fundamental aspect of our relationship to the clients that we serve. Then, thirdly, because of the way the world seems to be going, we are faced with the determination of our social or environmental values. The world is becoming ever more precarious—and “it’s getting real scary out there!”

All of this is not a simple matter to resolve. People are often confused and uncertain in this regard, but frequently they may not recognize or accept the fact that they are confused. Seemingly they simply have not worked out a coherent, consistent, and reasonably logical approach to the values that they hold—or think they hold—in life. Most people simply can’t express what it was they are working toward in their lives. Typically their values that they held had been achieved implicitly and accidentally along the way. Usually they have simply been “handed” down as someone’s or some organization’s position, creed, or purpose. Only in rare instances has an opportunity been provided for them to think this subject through carefully and systematically so an explicitly determined set of values was present for them to bring to bear in decision-making.

Earlier I strove to get to the heart of this massive problem in different ways. I argued that, for several reasons, the child and adolescent in society today are missing out almost completely on a sound “experiential” introduction to ethics. I believe this has created what I call an “ethical decision-making dilemma.” Initially, I believe, we need to reconsider our values and then re-state in some type of hierarchical—i.e., exactly what we believe they are in light of the changing times, and then, finally, we will then need to assess more carefully—on a regular basis—whether we are living up to those values we have chosen and so often glibly espouse.

This is true whether we are referring to what takes place in the home, the school system, the church, or out in the everyday world. The truth is that typically no systematic instruction in this most important subject is offered at any time. (And I refuse to accept the often-heard “osmosis stance”—that such knowledge is “better caught than taught.”) It helps to have people around you who are setting good examples. However, in the final analysis it is the individual who makes judgments and decisions based on experiences undergone.

The term ethics is used in three ways: (1) To classify a “way” or pattern of life (e.g., Muslim ethics; (2) As a listing of rules of conduct that is often called a moral code (e.g., professional ethics); and 3) As a description of an investigation or inquiry about rules of conduct or a way of life (e.g., a subdivision of ethics termed meta-ethics = inquiry that treats the meaning and interrelationship of words viewed as moral and ethical.)
For example, what is right or wrong; good or bad? Once again, we encounter the question of whether values are objective or subjective (i.e., do values exist whether a person is present to realize them or not? Or, for example, is it people who ascribe value to this or that relationship with others or with their physical environment?

We might ask: “Why is it so important that people give consideration to the topic of values in their lives?” The answer is that values are the major social forces that help to determine the direction a culture will take at any given moment. Choices made are necessarily based on the values and norms of the culture in which people live. Such values titled social values, educational values, scientific values, artistic values, etc. make up the highest level of the social system in a culture. These values represent the “ideal general character” (e.g., social-structured facilitation of individual achievement, equality of opportunity). Remember that overall culture in itself also serves a “pattern-maintenance function” as a society confronts the ongoing functional problems it faces.

Further, the values people hold have a direct relationship to how the nature of the human being is conceived. A number of attempts have been made to define human nature on a rough historical time scale. For example, the human has been conceived in five different ways in historical progression as (1) a rational animal, (2) a spiritual being, (3) a receptacle of knowledge, (4) a mind that can be trained by exercise, and (5) a problem-solving organism (Morris, 1956). Likewise, Berelson and Steiner (1964) traced six behavioral-science images of man and woman throughout recorded history. Identified chronologically these images are: (1) a philosophical image, (2) a Christian image, (3) a political image, (4) an economic image, (5) a psychoanalytic image, and (6) a behavioral-science image.

The “persistent problem” of values has brought confusion. As explained previously rapid change in society had caused general confusion about the subject of ethics. Instead of having an impossible ideal confronting the practical necessity of daily life, we have such a diverse inheritance of ethical ways that no matter which one we choose, the others are at least to some degree betrayed. Obviously, this confusion has been exacerbated because of the complex of moral systems that we have inherited (e.g., Hebraic, Christian, Renaissance, Industrial—and now Islam too).

This philosophic/religious confusion has historically carried over into all aspects of life. Today, it may well be impossible to gain objectivity and true historical perspective on the rapid change that is taking place. Nevertheless, a seemingly unprecedented burden of increasing complexity has been imposed on people’s understanding of themselves and their world. Many leaders, along with the rest of us, must certainly be wondering whether the whole affair can be managed.

Further, as we now comprehend that the 20th century was indeed one of marked transition from one era to another, some scholars are beginning to understand that America’s quite blind philosophy of optimism about history’s malleability and compatibility in keeping with American ideals may turn out to be very shortsighted. At least the weapons stalemate between the U.S.A. and the former U.S.S.R. brought to prominence the importance of nonmilitary determinants (e.g., politics and ideologies). This fact has—and also has NOT—sunk into the world’s mentality. Most importantly, the world is now witnessing the gradual, but seemingly inevitable, development of a vast ecological crisis that threatens the very existence
of the planet known as Earth.

Keeping the above six ways recommended by Lewis firmly in mind, in my teaching of ethical decision making, I finally adopted a three-step approach used by Prof. Richard Fox at Cleveland State University for 30 years as an initial way to get his students started. Proceeding on the assumption that a professional person should be able to work out rationally what right and wrong ethical behavior is, he recommended an approach in which there is a progression from the thought of Kant, to Mill, and then to Aristotle. This may be called a “three-step approach” (or a “trivium”). It consists of the application of three “tests” (phrased as questions) to be applied when one wishes to analyze an ethical problem or dilemma. These tests are called: (1) The test of consistency, or universalizability; (2) The test of consequences; and (3) The test of intentions.

A twenty-first century person has a choice to make. He or she must think deeply about the philosophic/religious position he or she holds has validity in the world of the 21st century. If this person’s position is the adoption of one of the world’s great religions, it would seem vital that he or she should really follow through with the dictates of their particular faith. It would seem to be crucial, however, that the leaders of the various world religions must work for consensus wherever possible on the great issues confronting humankind. Otherwise the perennial confrontations will only lead to frustration and eventual disaster.

The Function of Values in Society

Careful definition of a particular society is a highly complex task, each one having certain unique qualities while undoubtedly possessing many similarities with other societies. The components of societies are usually described as subsystems (e.g., the economy, the government). In a very real sense these subsystems have been developed to “divide up the work.” Before considering a more general discussion of the external environment from the standpoint of resources, the various social organizations, the power structure, and the value structure, I ask you to please consider this relatively brief presentation of Parsonsian “Action Theory.” As described by Johnson (1969; 1994) as being “a type of empirical system,” this particular (grand) theory has a long tradition in the field of sociology. It actually applies to an extremely wide range of systems from relationships between two people to that of total societies.

Initially, to understand this social theory, a person should appreciate that the general action system (implying instrumental activism) is viewed as being composed of four subsystems: (a) cultural system, (b) social system, (c) psychological system, and (d) behavioral-organic system. What this means, viewed from a different perspective, is that explicit human behavior is comprised of aspects that are cultural, social, psychological, and organic. These four subsystems together compose a cybernetic hierarchy of control and conditioning that operates in both directions (i.e., both up and down). (Johnson [1994] explained that an example of a cybernetic system might be a thermostat and an air-conditioning unit [p. 57]... there is an “instrumental activism” occasioned by the “value pattern” of modern societies in which a person’s self esteem depends on the extent a contribution is made in some way to life’s advancement.)

The first of the subsystems is “culture,” which according to Johnson (1969) “provides
the figure in the carpet—the structure and, in a sense, the ‘programming’ for the action system as a whole” (p. 46). The structure of this type of system is typically geared to the functional problems of that level that arise—and so on down the scale, respectively. Thus it is the subsystem of culture that legitimates and also influences the level below it (the social system). Typically, there is a definite strain toward consistency. However, the influence works both upward and downward within the action system, thereby creating a hierarchy of influence or conditioning.

Social life being what it has been and is, it is almost inevitable that strain will develop within the system. Johnson explains this as “dissatisfaction with the level of effectiveness on the functioning of the system in which the strain is felt” (p. 47). Such dissatisfaction may, for example, have to do with particular aspects of a social system as follows: (1) the level of effectiveness of resource procurement; (2) the success of goal attainment; (3) the justice or appropriateness of allocation of rewards or facilities; or (4) the degree to which units of the system are committed to realizing (or maintaining) the values of the system.

Strain may arise at the personality or psychological system level, and the resultant pressure could actually change the structure of the system above (the social system). This is not inevitable, however, because such strain might well be resolved satisfactorily at its own level (so to speak). Usually the pattern consistency of the action system displays reasonable flexibility, and this is especially true at the lower levels. For example, strain might be expressed by deviant behavior or in other ways such as by reduced identification with the social system by the person or group concerned.

Hence, it is the hierarchy of control and conditioning that comes into play when the sources of change (e.g., new religious or scientific ideas) begin to cause strain in the larger social systems, whereas the smaller social systems tend to be “strained” by the change that often develops at the personality or psychological system levels. In addition, it is quite apparent that social systems are often influenced considerably by contact with other social systems.

Just as there were four subsystems within the total action system defined by Parsons and others, there are evidently four levels within the subsystem that has been identified as the social system or structure. These levels, proceeding from “highest” to “lowest,” are (1) values, (2) norms, (3) the structure of collectivities, and (4) the structure of roles. Typically the higher levels are more general than the lower ones, with the latter group giving quite specific guidance to those segments or units of the particular system to which they apply. These “units” or “segments” are either collectivities or individuals in their capacity as role occupants.

Values represent the highest echelon of the social system level of the entire general action system. These values may be categorized into such “entities” as artistic values, educational values, social values, sport values, etc. Of course, all types or categories of values must be values of personalities. The social values of a particular social system are those values that are conceived of as representative of the ideal general character that is desired by those who ultimately hold the power in the system being described. The most important social values in North America, for example, have been (1) the rule of law, (2) the socio-structural facilitation of individual achievement, and (3) the equality of opportunity (Johnson, 1969, p. 48).

Norms are the shared, sanctioned rules which govern the second level of the social structure. The average person finds it difficult to separate in his or her mind the concepts of
values and norms. Keeping in mind the examples of values offered immediately above, some examples of norms are (1) the institution of private property, (2) private enterprise, (3) the monogamous, conjugal family, and (4) the separation of church and state.

Collectivities are interaction systems that may be distinguished by their goals, their composition, and their size. A collectivity is characterized by conforming acts and by deviant acts, which are both classes of members’ action that relates to the structure of the system. Interestingly (and oddly) enough, each collectivity has a structure that consists of four levels also (not discussed here). In a pluralistic society one finds an extremely large variety of collectivities that are held together to a varying extent by an overlapping membership constituency. Thus, members of one collectivity can and do exert greater or lesser amounts of influence upon the members of the other collectivities to which they belong.

Roles refer to the behavioral organisms (the actual humans) who interact within each collectivity. Each role has a current normative structure specific to it, even though such a role may be gradually changing. (For example, the role of the sport manager or physical activity educator/coach or recreation director could be in a transitory state in that certain second-level norms could be changing, and yet each specific sport manager (or physical educator/coach or recreation director) still has definite normative obligations that are possible to delineate more specifically than the more generalized second-level norms, examples of which were offered above.)

A hierarchy of control and conditioning. Finally, these four levels of social structure themselves also compose a hierarchy of control and conditioning. As Johnson (p. 49) explains, the higher levels “legitimate, guide, and control” the lower levels, and pressure of both a direct and indirect nature can be—and generally is—employed when the infraction or violation occurs and is known.

A society is the most nearly self-subsistent type of social system and, interestingly enough again, societies or “live systems or personalities” typically have four basic types of functional problems (each with its appropriate value principle) as follows:

1. A pattern-maintenance problem (L) that has to do with the inculcation of the value system and the maintenance of the social system’s commitment to it,
2. An integration problem (I) that is at work to implement the value of solidarity expressed through norms that accordingly regulate the great variety of processes,
3. A goal-attainment problem (G) that implements the value of effectiveness of group or collective action on behalf of the social system toward this aim, and
4. An adaptation problem (A) whereby the economy implements the value of utility (i.e., the investment-capitalization unit).

The economy of a society is its adaptive subsystem, while the society’s form of government (polity) has become known as its goal-attainment subsystem. The integrative and pattern-maintenance subsystems, which do not have names that can be used in everyday speech easily, consist actually of a set or series of processes by which a society’s production factors are related, combined, and transformed with utility-the value principle of the adaptive system-as the interim product. These products “packaged” as various forms of “utility” are employed in and by other functional subsystems of the society.

Hence, each subsystem exchanges factors and products, becomes involved as pairs, and
engages in what has been called a “double interchange.” It is theorized that each subsystem contributes one factor and one product (i.e., one category or aggregate of factors and one category or aggregate of products) to each of the other three functional subsystems. Considered from the standpoint of all the pairs possible to be involved in the interchange, there are therefore six double-interchange systems. Factors and products are both involved in the transformational processes, each being functional for the larger social system. Factors are general and therefore more remote, while products are specific and therefore more directly functional. The performance of the functional requirements has been described as a “circular flow of interchanges,” with the factors and products being continuously used up and continuously replaced.

An example of interchange process taking place begins to help us see how this complex circular flow of interchanges occurs. Johnson explains how one of the six interchange systems functions typically to create the political support system in a society. This is how the functional problem of goal-attainment is resolved through the operation of the society’s form of government (polity)—that is, the interchange between the polity and the integrative subsystems. “The political process is the set of structured activities that results in the choice of goals and the mobilization of societal resources for the attainment of these goals” (p. 51). First, the integrative system contributes to political accomplishment by achieving a certain degree of consensus and “solidarity.” These qualities are “registered” and “delivered” in the form of votes and interest demands. These are, in fact, forms of political support—that is, support from the integrative system to the polity. Conversely, in return, the government (polity) bolsters (integrative) solidarity through political leadership that, in turn, produces binding decisions. Thus, this leadership and the binding decisions can also be considered as “political support”—support from the polity or government to the integrative system (one of the two systems that “produces utility”—i.e., implements one of the four values of which utility is one.)

The social significance of interchange analysis is tremendous. The interchange of factors and products identifies the types of processes that somehow must take place in any social system. This scheme specifies also their functional significance and also indicates relations between these processes that are broad but yet important. As was stated earlier, the functional subsystems compose a hierarchy of control and conditioning. Thus, the processes involved are influenced, conditioned, and controlled. These same interchange processes must be going on in any functioning social system, but it should be understood that their specific forms vary greatly. The four levels of a particular social system (i.e., values, norms, collectivities, roles) provide the forms and channels by which any unique social system carries on its functionally necessary processes. Fundamental social change means that some basic transformation has taken, or is taking, place in one or more levels of the social system (structure). Obviously, basic change must inevitably affect the operation of the system in some distinct, measurable way.

Parsons’ general action system is then actually an “equilibrium model,” but this does not mean that it is necessarily conservative and/or static. As explained above, social systems may, or may not, be in a state of equilibrium, and change is certainly most possible within this theory’s framework. This theory is a reasonable, theoretical explanation of how social change can and does take place. Social systems are conceived of as having a normative structure, which may or may not be stable. To understand how to achieve equilibrium within
a social system, it is at least theoretically necessary to learn to distinguish between processes that will maintain or change a given social structure. Finally, it is important to understand that sometimes the higher levels of social structure may be maintained (if this is desired and desirable) by understanding how to change one or more of its lower levels. Quite obviously, this last point is most important to anyone serving in a managerial capacity in any organization within a given social system.

The Value Attached to Physical Activity in World History

The human is born; the human lives; the human moves. To what extent this takes place depends on innumerable occurrences or happenings in a person’s life. Here I will simply relate most briefly that happened in “human movement in developmental physical activity in exercise, sport, and expressive movement through world history” era by era throughout the past 10,000 years or so.

Primitive Society. Activities of everyday life involving human movement either evolved instinctively or were taught to the young as a means for survival. Dancing and games were probably a part of primitive life to provide recreation and preserve strong healthy bodies. There would typically be a social element involved with such physical activity.

Early Societies. The elders taught physical activity education to the extent that the young person could carry out normal daily activities. Men prepared physically for militaristic reasons and perhaps to perform in some sporting games, but in the latter to a limited extent. Women’s physical activity probably came from daily “living demands.” Religious rituals demanded that certain physical activities be performed such as dancing.

Greece. Physical (activity) education was highly regarded in ancient Greece and held a prominent place in Greek culture. The development of a healthy body as well as intellectual growth were both part of the Grecian ideal. For the Athenians a balance and (accompanying) harmony between “mind and body” was a most important goal in life. Physical training for the army took precedence in Sparta and was an integral part of a young Spartan’s education. The games arid festivals in Greek life gave young athletes opportunities to compete arid exhibit their physical skills.

Rome. Regular physical activity education in the Roman period was encouraged as one way to reach the Roman ideal to become an upstanding citizen willing to serve his nation. Training for the military was and essential part of a child’s upbringing to prepare for military service. In Rome’s “later period,” physical activity education played a minor role in Roman education because it was seen as a degenerate.

Early Middle Ages. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Christianity spread rapidly in the West and became a predominant force for the next thousand years. Christianity sought moral, religious and intellectual pursuits more so than it did the physical. As a result, the ascetic way of life prevailed in theory, and the body was denounced because of its “sinful urges.” A revival of general education and, to a degree, of physical training occurred during what has been called the Age of Chivalry. Knights were prepared to endure physical and subsequent militaristic stress as well as pay homage to their lord, the Church, and women.

Later Middle Ages. The Church’s overpowering role in society was still felt greatly during the later Middle Ages. As a result, there was little room for formal physical activity education.
There were, however, some unorganized sports and games played within the confines of cathedrals and universities. With the rise of humanism, individual concerns were emphasized and proper care and development of the body became more important. Sport and games were used to prepare a boy for war as well as provide some a recreational outlet.

Early Modern Period. After the humanistic movement gained widespread recognition over Europe, a shift in educational aims led to a decline of physical education in the early Modern Period. The Reformation did little to revive physical activity within education, but a minority of educators maintained physical training in their curriculum. In education during the Early Modern Period, the study of classical languages and ancient civilizations were increasingly emphasized.

Age of Enlightenment. Abrupt changes occurred socially, politically, and in education during the Age of Enlightenment. Naturalism was once again revived which meant that physical activity education was to grow in importance. The Church and state drifted further apart in the control of education. Many new educational theorists were contributing in an effort to develop a more sound philosophy of education. As education became relatively stable in theory, new ideas for physical activity education were included.

Industrial Age. During the nineteenth century, physical education emerged more or less as a unique product of the heritage and culture within each nation. For example, in Germany, Friedrich Jahn started the Turnverein movement which emphasized physical training as part of a youth’s education. Values within physical education grew in a parallel relationship with social, political, and economic changes. This trend was mostly directed as an outcome of nationalistic feelings.

20th Century. In the 20th century governments tried more or less to ensure that all those who receive an education are also given some physical activity education. The field itself within formal education had the following goal: “The field of physical education (including sport) and the allied fields of health education and recreation should strive to fulfill a significant role in the general educational pattern of the arts, social sciences and natural sciences.” (Zeigler, 1977a:63) However, the philosophic stances in regard to the importance of physical activity education vary from “essentialistic to progressivistic” depending on a variety of social factors.

The Kaleidoscopic Value Orientation
Of Physical Activity Education (including Sport)

The historical summary completed above traced physical activity (including sport) very sketchily through history. However, from era to era there has been a developing kaleidoscopic value orientation of the problems and concerns related to human physical activity in exercise, sport, dance, and physical recreation at all levels and in the public sector. My position is that, individually and collectively, instances such as these serve to “make the case” that the present situation is becoming steadily and increasingly undesirable as we look to the future in the twenty-first century.

In describing competitive sport in the public sector, it could be classified as amateur, semiprofessional or professional, but somehow the distinction has become ever more “blurred”. The category “semiprofessional” is present in
practice, but it has never been “officially recognized”. Compared to the standards set in their ethical codes for practitioners by the established professions (e.g., education, law, medicine) the only thing that seems to be truly professional about sport in most circumstances is the fact that the participants receive money for their services! In addition, a number of them receive ridiculously high amounts of that legal tender.

In the case of physical (activity) education, however, teachers become members of the education profession, have university degrees, and must be licensed to teach in public education. The problem here is that, despite the mounting of irrefutable evidence as to the benefits of regular exercise and physical recreation through intramural athletics, instruction for “normal” and “special-needs” children and youth in a program mandated in states and provinces varies consistently from good, to fair, to poor, to “non-existent”! The “varsity sport program” for the very few, however, is typically “good” to “excellent.”

Sport as an Anti-value?
To continue, the basic argument I have been making is as follows: Unless sport participation does “such-and-such” to make people and the society in which they live a better place, such instances must simply be regarded as serving as anti-values!

What we are finding increasingly is a situation where people seem to be so anxious to escape the real world that they are rushing into various sports and similar activities—often involving the possibility of severe personal danger with increasing intensity. They are seemingly often unaware of the potential outcomes of such involvement. (One wonders “where the parents are?” in such instances…)

Coincidently, onrushing science and technology have also become the tempters of many coaches and athletes. This possibility has added another dimension to the personal and professional conduct of those people who are unduly anxious for recognition and financial gain.

The premise presented here is, therefore, that beliefs such as these have created a vacuum of positive belief. Hence, sport is overall increasingly becoming more of an anti-value for those who would view educational competitive sport as a life-enhancer (e.g., those interuniversity sports that are not sustained through gate receipts—golf, tennis, wrestling, swimming, gymnastics, soccer, and almost all of women’s sport).

Physical Education As “All Things to All People” or “Not Too Much To Anyone”

Shifting attention to the exercise component and the intramural athletics component of the overall physical activity program (including varsity competitive sport), the development of what was originally the Association for the Advance of Physical Education (with the word “American” added the next year) has been interesting and successful in a variety of ways depending on the interpretation
of the word “success.” Physical education has been termed a profession, but it really is a field within the profession of education. Unfortunately, somehow the connotation of the name—and it reduction to “PE”—is such that it was not (could not be) used as the name for a profession outside of the educational establishment in the public sector. It is not suitable…

Subsequently within the Association, however, a number of so-called “allied” professions” emerged (i.e., health education, safety education, recreation and park administration, dance (education), athletics (sport), and exercise therapy). The development of these “professions” was undoubtedly influenced down through the years by social forces or societal influences of greater or lesser intensity.

Hess (1959) helped us to somewhat understand how what happened socially and politically enabled him to delineate the leading objectives of physical education from 1900 to 1960:

- Hygiene or Health Objective—1900–1919
- Socio-Educational Objective—1920–1929
- Socio-Recreational Objective—1930–1939
- Physical Fitness & Health Objective—1939–1945
- ‘Total Fitness’ and International Understanding—1946–1957
- Disciplinary Development—1959–

While all of this socio-political development was occurring, a succession of leaders in the field of physical education were attempting to spell out their visions of the field’s objectives in the literature. The following is a chronological list of these leading scholars/practitioners from 1900 to 1950 (see References and Bibliography below, also):

- Hetherington, Wood and Cassidy, Williams, Hughes, Bowen and Mitchell, Nash, Sharman, Wayman. Esslinger, Staley, McCloy, Clark, Cobb, Lynn, Brownell, Scott, Bucher, Oberteuffer, Metheny, Shepherd, Brightbill, Sapora.

An analysis of their recommendations (Zeigler, 1977) resulted on a listing of what could conceivably be called “common denominators” in program development:

- Movement Fundamentals
- Regular Exercise
- Health & Safety Education
- Physical Recreation
- Physical Fitness
- Competitive Sport
- Therapeutic Exercise

Subsequently I expanded a bit on this list of so-called “common denominators” for physical activity education in the hope that there might be considerable agreement in the developed world. These proposed common denominators are as follows:

1. That regular physical activity education (including related health information) be required for all children and young people up to and including sixteen years of age.
2. That human movement fundamentals through various dance and other expressive activities be included in the elementary, middle, and high school curricula.
3. That progressive standards for physical vigor and endurance for people of all ages be developed from prevailing norms.

4. That the physical activity & health educator’s responsibility should be a full-time one.

(Note: The implication here is that any sport coaching involvement on his or her part would be the same as that with any other teacher in the school based on the practices of the community involved.)

5. That remediable bodily defects be corrected where possible through exercise therapy. Referral to the family doctor may be necessary to initiate a remedial program. Where possible, adapted sport and physical recreation experiences should be offered.

6. That boys and girls (and young men and women) have an experience in competitive sport at some stage of their development.

7. That people develop certain positive attitudes toward their own health in particular and toward community hygiene in general. Basic health knowledge should be integral part of the school curriculum.

(Note: This “common denominator” should be a specific objective of the profession of physical activity education only to the extent that it relates to developmental physical activity.)

8. That sport, dance, exercise, and play can make a most important contribution throughout life toward the worthy use of leisure.

9. That character and/or personality development is vitally important to the development of the young person. Therefore, it is especially important that all human movement experience in sport, dance, exercise, and play at the various educational levels be guided by men and women with high professional standards and ethics.

Despite the above, there is ongoing evidence that “all is not well.” In 2006 Eleanor Randolph, in “The Big, Fat American Kid Crisis…and Things We Should Do About It” explained that:

The problem is all too obvious. At the mall, the movie theater or the airport, the evidence appears in the flesh – altogether too much of it. Americans are now officially supersized, overweight, obese even. This is true of almost two thirds of American adults, but what is more alarming is that it is also true of millions of American children. The “little ones” aren’t so little any more!

Yes, they are gently labeled “chunky,” “husky” or “plus-sized” by the clothes marketers who are adding larger and larger sizes to the children’s racks. But these euphemisms can’t cover up the unpleasant reality that too many of our kids are so dangerously overweight that they are spilling out of their childhood too chubby for their car seats or too uncomfortable as they squeeze into their little desks at elementary school. But the real problem is not aesthetics or the need to save classroom space. Childhood obesity has become a national medical crisis.

Over the last 30 years, obesity rates have doubled among pre-school children and tripled...
for those aged 6 to 11. For those added pounds, the young are starting to pay a terrible price. Adult diabetes has rapidly become a childhood disease. Pediatricians are seeing high cholesterol and high blood pressure and other grown-up problems in their patients. Teachers and school psychiatrists are coping with a plague of shame and distress among children whose size subjects them to hazing and other cruelties by their classmates.

There is some evidence that more people are becoming aware of the two problems I have been describing. The Wall Street Journal (2010 06 09) summarized a report emanating from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education and the American Heart Association stating that there was a slight improvement in the percentage of states requiring physical education since that of a survey carried out in 2006. However, most of the states have no requirement as to the time allotment of such a requirement—and half of them permits waivers, exemptions, and substitutions…”

Reports of this type could go on endlessly, but I’ll end with a conclusion stated in Active Living Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Fall, 2007, Research Brief):

In schools across the United States, physical education has been substantially reduced—and in some cases completely eliminated—in response to budget concerns and pressures to improve academic test scores. Yet the available evidence shows that children who are physically active and fit tend to perform better in the classroom, and that daily physical education does not adversely affect academic performance. Schools can provide outstanding learning environments while improving children’s health through physical education.

The situation in Canada doesn’t appear to be much better. Jo-Ann Fellows, a columnist in Fredericton, NB, Canada, recently wrote:

For the fourth year in a row, a failing grade has been handed out to the whole country. Only 12 per cent of Canadian children and youth are meeting the guideline of 90 minutes per day.

The report card was issued by Active Healthy Kids Canada. Its mandate states that it provides “...the evidence base for our communications and issue advocacy work to increase support for quality, accessible and enjoyable physical activity participation experiences for young people across Canada.”

(See: <dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/search/article/1056903>)

Following these brief analyses of (1) the prevailing situation in public-sector sport and (2) physical (activity) education (including athletics) within the education establishment, I have included a number of examples to support the overall position being taken here.

**Future Societal Scenarios**

Walter Truett Anderson, president of the American Division of the World Academy of Art and Science, has sketched four different scenarios as postulations for the future of earthlings in this ongoing adventure of civilization. In an essay titled “Futures of the Self,” taken from The Future of the Self: Inventing the Postmodern Person (1997), Anderson argued
convincingly that current trends are adding up to a future identity crisis for humankind. The creation of the present “modern self,” he explains, began with Plato, Aristotle, and with the rights of humans in Roman legal codes.

The developing conception of self bogged down in the Middle Ages, but fortunately was resurrected in the Renaissance Period described by many historians as the second half of The Middle Ages. Since then the human “self” has been advancing like a “house afire” as the Western world has gone through an almost unbelievable transformation. As it happened, scientists like Galileo and Copernicus influenced philosophers such as Descartes and Locke to foresee a world in which the self was invested with human rights.

“One World, Many Universes.” Anderson’s “One World, Many Universes” version is the most likely to occur. This is a scenario characterized by high economic growth, steadily increasing technological progress, and globalization combined with high psychological development. Such psychological maturity, he predicts, will be possible for a certain segment of the world’s population because “active life spans will be gradually lengthened through various advances in health maintenance and medicine” (pp. 251-253)

Nevertheless, a problem has developed with this dream of individual achievement of inalienable rights and privileges, one that looms large in the early years of this new century. The modern self that was envisioned by Descartes, a rational, integrated self that Anderson likens to Captain Kirk at the command post of Starship Enterprise, appears to be having an identity crisis. The image of this bold leader (he or she!) taking us fearlessly into the great unknown has begun to fade as alternate scenarios for the future of life on Earth are envisioned. In a world where globalization and economic “progress” seemingly must be rejected because of catastrophic environmental concerns or “demands,” the bold-future image could well “be replaced by a post-modern self; de–centered, multidimensional, and changeable” (p. 50).

Captain Kirk—as he “boldly went where no man had gone before”—this time to rid the world of terrorists and evil leaders), now faces a second crucial change. As leaders seek to shape the world of the 21st century, based on Anderson’s analysis, there is another force—the systemic-change force mentioned above—that is shaping the future. This all-powerful force may well exceed the Earth’s ability to cope. As gratifying as such factors as “globalization along with economic growth” and “psychological development” may seem to the folks in a coming “One-World, Many Universes” scenario, there is a flip side to this prognosis. Anderson identifies this image as “The Dysfunctional Family” scenario. All of these benefits of so-called progress are highly expensive and available now only to relatively few of the six billion plus people on earth. Anderson foresees this affairs splintering into (1) “a world of modern people happily doing their thing; of modern people still obsessed with progress, economic gain, and organizational bigness; and (2) of postmodern people being trampled and getting angry” (p. 51). As people get angrier, Anderson envisions present-day terrorism in North America seeming like child’s play.

The Field Has Reached a Crucial Stage

There is good evidence that the next ten to fifteen years will be crucial ones for the field of physical (activity) education and (so-called) educational sport. This is true because the profession is not growing and developing as rapidly and strongly as it should be in a
society where the idea of change must now become our watchword. View it as you will, it is impossible to refute the thought that change, like death and taxes, is here to stay.

Diagnosis of the present situation leads to the belief that the “developmental physical activity” professed by the field of physical activity education (including educational/recreational sport—as it has been known and promoted—is structurally deficient in what may be called the field’s architecture. Many people recognize that something is wrong, but most of them don’t appear to understand the extent of the malady that has gradually infected a still embryonic profession.

The situation appears to be as follows: Throughout the land school programs of physical activity education inculcating theory and practice of developmental activity education at all levels are either good, bad, indifferent, or completely lacking! The fourteen “principles of physical activity education” that I have outlined provide indisputable evidence that regular physical activity is required for vital life efficiency and longevity, but the field of education and the public that may provide it for youth (or not!) have assumed a sort of “I know it’s true approach, but it’s costly, a nuisance, and ‘sweaty’ too—not to mention that it interferes with the professional sport that I am watching on television.”.

At the same time, as far as people’s children are concerned, there are all sorts of varsity sport teams “for the very few” competing at all levels of education throughout the length and breadth of the land. The world is becoming increasingly “sport-happy” as we hear or read daily that poor health and physical-activity practices are creating a situation where children and youth the coming generation will die before their parents do!

Still further, a recent study in Scotland points out that the situation with adults has reached a “ridiculous stage” as well. It was stated that 97.5% of adults there are “likely to be cigarette smokers, heavy drinkers, physically inactive, overweight or have a poor diet. These findings may be even worse because they were reported in a 2003 Scottish Health Survey published in BMC Public Health (The Vancouver Sun, 2010, 06, 12, C8).

What Should We Achieve in the 21st Century?

Note: These recommendations to the profession of physical (activity) education originally appeared on pp. 340-346 of the author’s 2005 History and Status of American Physical Education and Educational Sport (Victoria, BC: Trafford). Based on my various efforts to analyze the events of the final half of the 20th century, these 20 recommendations are offered again for the consideration of the field of physical activity education including educational sport in the 21st century. For any parent who might be reading these words, they may help him or her to comprehend the situation better.

1. A Sharper Image. In the past the field of physical (activity) education and educational sport tried to be “all things to all people.” Now it should sharpen its image and improve the quality of its efforts by focusing primarily on developmental physical activity—specifically, human motor performance in sport, exercise, and related expressive movement. As we
sharpen our image, we should make a strong effort to include those who are working in the private agency and commercial sectors as members of the profession. This means that we will extend our efforts to promote the finest type of developmental physical activity for people of all ages whether they be members of what are considered to be “normal, accelerated, or special” populations.

2. *A Proper Field’s Name.* All sorts of name changes have been implemented at the university level (1) to explain either what people think we are doing or should be doing, or (2) to camouflage the presumed “unsavory” connotation of the term “physical education” that evidently conjures up the notion of a “dumb jock” working with the lesser part of a tri-partite human body. We should continue to focus primarily on developmental physical activity as defined immediately above while moving toward an acceptable working term for our profession. In so doing, we should keep in mind the field’s or subject-matter’s bifurcated nature in that it has both theoretical and practical (or disciplinary and professional) aspects. At the moment the terms “kinesiology” and “physical education” are in vogue. A desirable name for the profession might be physical activity education with the term developmental physical activity as the field of study or discipline. We could delineate this further by including exercise, sport, and expressive movement as aspects of the field.

3. *A Tenable Body of Knowledge.* Various social forces and professional concerns have placed us in a position where we don’t know where or what our body of knowledge is. As a profession we will strongly support the idea of disciplinary definition and the continuing development of a body of knowledge based on such a consensual definition. From this must come a merging of tenable scientific theory in keeping with societal values. Through computer technology we can now gradually, steadily, and increasingly provide our members with the knowledge as ordered generalizations in an evolving manner to help them perform as top-flight professionals. As qualified professionals, we simply must possess the requisite knowledge, competencies, and skills necessary to provide developmental physical activity services of a high quality to the public.

4. *Our Own Professional Associations.* There is currently insufficient support of our own professional and scholarly associations for a variety of reasons. We need to develop voluntary and mandatory mechanisms that relate membership in professional and scholarly organizations both directly and indirectly to stature within the overall field. We simply must now commit ourselves also to work tirelessly and continually to promote the welfare of professional practitioners who are serving the public in areas that we represent. Additionally, it may be necessary to exert any available pressures to encourage people to give first priority to our own groups (as opposed to those of related disciplines and/or allied professions). The logic behind
this dictum is that our own survival must come first for us!

5. **Professional Licensing.** Most teachers/coaches in the schools, colleges, and universities are seemingly protected indefinitely by the shelter of the all-embracing teaching profession. Now, additionally, we should now move rapidly and strongly to seek official recognition of our endeavors in public, semi-public, and private agency work and in commercial organizations relating to developmental physical activity through professional licensing at the state and provincial level. Further, we should encourage individuals to apply for voluntary registration as qualified practitioners at the federal level. This should be encouraged no matter with what terminology they classify their efforts (e.g., personal trainer).

6. **Harmony Within The Field.** An unacceptable series of gaps and misunderstandings has developed among those in our field concerned primarily with the bio-scientific aspects of human motor performance, those concerned with the social-science and humanities aspects, those concerned with the general education of all students, and those concerned with the professional preparation of physical activity educators/coaches—all at the community or university level. We will now strive to work for a greater balance and improved understanding among these essential entities within the field/discipline.

7. **Harmony Among The “Allied Professions”.** The field of physical education spawned a number of allied professions down through the years of the 20th century. We should now strive to comprehend what they claim that they do professionally, and where there may be a possible overlap with what we as educators or practicing professionals claim that we do. Where disagreements prevail, they should be ironed out to the greatest extent possible.

8. **An Ideal Relationship With University Athletics/Sport.** A wedge is being driven increasingly between units of kinesiology/physical education and interuniversity athletics. This is true in those educational institutions where gate receipts are increasingly becoming a stronger factor. Such a rift serves no good purpose and is counter to the best interests of both groups. We will now work for greater understanding and harmony with those people who are primarily interested in the promotion of highly organized athletics. At the same time it is imperative that we do all in our power to maintain athletics in a sound educational perspective within our schools, colleges, and universities.

9. **An Ideal Relationship with Intramurals and Recreational Sport.** Intramurals and recreational sport is in a transitional state at present in that it has proved that it is “here to stay” at the college and university level. Nevertheless, intramurals hasn’t really taken hold yet, generally speaking, at the high-school or middle-school levels, despite the fact that it has a great deal to offer the large majority of students in what may truly be called recreational
or even educational sport. There is a minority of administrators functioning at the college level who would like to adopt the term “campus recreation” as their official designation. However, this is not an appropriate designation unless this program encompasses all recreational activities on campus. It is impractical and inadvisable to attempt to subsume all non-curricular activities on campus under one division or unit. Further, the various departments and divisions of ought to work for consensus on the idea that intramurals and recreational sport is co-curricular in nature and deserve regular funding as laboratory experience in the same manner that general education course experiences in physical education receive their funding for instructional purposes.

10. Guaranteeing Equal Opportunity for All. Because “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” are guaranteed to all, as a professional educator we should move positively and strongly to see to it that equal opportunity is indeed provided to the greatest possible extent to women, to minority groups, and to special populations as they seek to improve the quality of their lives through the finest type of experience in the activities of our field.

11. The Kinesiology/Physical Education Identity. In addition to the development of the so-called allied professions (e.g., health education in the second quarter of the twentieth century), we witnessed the advent of a disciplinary thrust in the 1960s that was followed by a splintering of many of the various “knowledge components” and subsequent formation of many different scholarly societies. These developments have undoubtedly weakened the core field of physical (activity) education as it is now called within schools. It appears that the term “kinesiology,” along with improved scholarly effort, has strengthened the field’s status at the university level. Thus, it is now more important than ever that we hold high the developmental physical education identity. Additionally we should re-affirm and delineate even more carefully our relationship with our “allied professions”.

12. The Application of a Competency Approach. Considering the failures and inconsistencies of longstanding educational teaching methodology, we will as a field explore diligently the educational possibilities of a competency approach as it might apply to general education, to professional preparation, and to all aspects of our professional endeavor in public, semi-public, private, and commercial agency endeavors. This means that all education is experiential in the sense that laboratory experiences characterize all course instruction.

13. Managing the Enterprise Effectively. All professionals in our unique field of developmental are managers—but to varying degrees. The “one course in administration” approach with no laboratory or internship experience of earlier times is simply not sufficient now or for the future with those positions that are “substantively” administrative in nature. There is an urgent need to apply a competency approach in the preparation (as well
as in the continuing education) of those who will serve as managers either within educational circles or elsewhere in the society at large.

14. **A High Level of Ethics in Physical Activity Education (including Educational Sport).** In the course of the development of the best professions, the various, embryonic professional groups have gradually become conscious of the need for a set of professional ethics—that is, a set of professional obligations that are established as norms for practitioners in good standing to follow. Our unique field needs both a creed and a detailed code of ethics right now as we move ahead in our development. Such a move is important because, generally speaking, ethical confusion prevails in North American society. Development of a sound code of ethics, combined with steady improvement in the three essentials of a fine profession (i.e., [a] an extensive period of training, [b] a significant intellectual component that must be mastered before the profession is practiced, and [c] a recognition by society that the trained person can provide a basic, important service to its citizens) would relatively soon place us in a much firmer position to claim that we are indeed members of a fine discipline and accompanying professional field.)

15. **The Reunification of the Profession’s Integral Elements.** Because there now appears to be reasonable agreement that our field, one that is now called by such a multitude of often incongruent names, is concerned primarily with developmental physical activity as manifested in human motor performance in sport, exercise, and related expressive movement, we will now work for the reunification of those elements of our profession that should be uniquely ours within our disciplinary definition.

16. **Cross-Cultural Comparison and International Understanding.** We have done reasonably well in the area of international relations within the Western world due to the solid efforts of many dedicated people over a considerable period of time. However, we need now to redouble our efforts to make cross-cultural comparisons of kinesiology and physical education while reaching out for international understanding and cooperation. Much greater understanding on the part of all of the concepts of ‘communication,’ ‘diversity,’ and ‘cooperation’ is required for the creation of a better life for all in a peaceful world. Our field, both its disciplinary and professional aspects, can contribute significantly toward this long range objective.

17. **Recognizing Permanency and Change.** The “principal principles” espoused for physical education and sport in the 1950s by the late Dr. Arthur Steinhaus of George Williams College still apply basically to our professional endeavors (i.e., the overload principle, the principle of reversibility, the principle of integration and integrity, and the principle of the priority of man and woman). We will continue to emphasize that which is timeless in our work, while at the same time accept the inevitability of certain societal change.

18. **Improvement of the Quality of Life.** Our field is unique within education and
in society. Since fine living and professional success involve so much more than the important verbal and mathematical skills, we will emphasize strongly that education is a lifelong enterprise. Further, we will stress that the quality of life can be improved significantly through the achievement of a higher degree of kinetic awareness and through regular, heightened experiences in sport, exercise, and related expressive movement.

19. Length of Individual Life. Mounting evidence indicates that people will also live longer if they live life actively and make wise exercise choices. Despite this increased longevity, healthcare costs will be reduced because of the ongoing health benefits derived from such regular involvement. So, in addition to promoting the idea that “quality of life” will be heightened, we will stress also the practical idea that lowered healthcare costs will accompany this increased length-of-life “bonus” that regular physical activity provides.

20. A Reassurance of Our “Will to Win”. The developments of the past 50 years have undoubtedly created a state of unease within the discipline and the field. They have also raised doubts on the part of some as to our possession of a “will to win” through the achievement of the highest type of professional status. We pledge ourselves anew to make still greater efforts to become vibrant and stirring through absolute dedication and commitment in our disciplinary and professional endeavors. Ours is a high calling as we seek to improve the quality of life for all through the finest type of human motor performance in sport, exercise, and related expressive movement.

Concluding Statement

Those who read these words and who are truly concerned about the future of humankind, wherever you may be, are strongly urged to get involved now with the reforms that seem so necessary. In the immediate future, please seek the answer to two fundamental questions:

(1) In what ways can we institute related physical activity accurately to learn if sport is—or is not—fulfilling its presumed role and providing value as a presumably beneficent social institution?

(2) Depending on whether the answer to #1 is positive or negative, will you then also have the motivation to do your utmost to help related physical activity education (and related health education) achieve what should be its rightful place in society?

The author’s stance is obviously that:

Human physical activity, broadly interpreted and experienced under wise educational or recreational conditions, can indeed provide value and be a worthwhile social institution contributing vitally to the well being, ongoing health, and longevity of humankind?
PART IV

The Sport Hero Phenomenon

History has been replete with the exploits of heroes and heroines. It could be argued that a society needs its heroes and heroines as part of its growth and development process, as well as for pattern maintenance. If these leaders don’t appear in the normal (abnormal?) course of events (as seems to be the case today), it could be hypothesized further that society will somehow create them in sometimes unexpected places as people fulfill exacting, trying, and unusual roles that are demanded of them.

There appears to be no doubt but that certain, quite specific societal conditions provide greater opportunity for the individual with heroic qualities to emerge (e.g., war, emergencies, crises, competitive sport). Nevertheless, we might agree that such a person might emerge at any time or place if a “combination of conditions” prevails in any of life’s recognized activities.

Please keep in mind that a hero has been defined in the past as “a man [or woman] of distinguished courage or ability admired for his [or her] brave deeds and qualities.” A culture hero appears to be a notch higher on the scale, however, and is explained as “a mythicized historical figure who embodies the aspirations or ideals of a society” (Random House Dictionary, 1988, p. 488).

In making an attempt to carry out an analysis such as this, the investigator was faced with the fact that several choices would have to be made. For example, it is one thing to describe what a sport hero was at some time in the past, as opposed to what such a person is today. Also, many people would like to see a discussion about what a sport hero should be (in the vain hope that such a wish might actually bring about a change in people’s outlooks).

A second choice that was confronted relates to what person or group of people is making an assessment that so-and-so is indeed a sport hero. A person might believe that Walter Payton of football fame was a sport hero of the finest type in the United States. Citizens of Canada, however, would probably view the great hockey player, Wayne Gretzky, or the late Terry Fox (the one-legged runner suffering from cancer who sought to run across the entire country), eligible for such an honor. Obviously, what country the athlete resides in makes a significant difference! Also, a state or provincial legislature at times passes a resolution about a great athlete, and a university even granted an honorary doctorate to a great hockey goaltender several years ago. Moving to a broader sphere, a belief about a great athlete may be further extended to the national, societal, or world level.

Here, therefore, the author has delimited himself (1) to the delineation of those factors or influences that should be considered when (2) a nation gives every indication that it regards a particular man or woman as a sport hero now. (Note: Because it is awkward and/or out of date to continually refer to “sport hero or sport “heroine”, hereafter the term “sport hero” will be used, and the reader should understand that both sexes are intended by this term.)

The Hero in Sport

Turning to the topic of the sport hero, consider the situation in the United States in the
first half of the twentieth century. If we seek to name a United States sport hero and place him or her in cultural perspective during this time, many people would immediately name Babe Ruth as a sport (and culture?) hero in the post-World War I era. In an earlier paper, I argued that Lou Gehrig, the Babe’s teammate, is actually the person who should have been named as both the sport and the culture hero—and that this recognition should have carried through to the present (1987). Babe Ruth, as the argument goes, should have simply been designated as a great (superb!) athlete. (In 1958, p. 267, Kahn, writing on the topic satirically, stated “Hollywood offers Ava Gardner as Aphrodite; sports gives us Babe Ruth as Zeus.”)

**Babe Ruth (Assessed by Crepeau)**

Eminent sport historian, Dick Crepeau, writing about the “tensions of the twenties”, viewed this decade “as an important watershed in the development of the United States.” In commenting about George Herman Ruth, Crepeau adds to the image suggested by Kahn above: “Ruth is the essence of the rugged individual playing the national game of the cow pasture in an urban stadium before the cheering masses of the machine age” (Pers. Corres., 2011/01/20).

Building on this statement that seems to epitomize the early 20th-century growth of the world’s largest and most powerful capitalistic democracy, it becomes understandable why a number of philosophers and other critics have argued that the United States has had “an idealistic superstructure and a materialistic base!” If this is true, it is probably nowhere more evident than in the way that Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, two of the more important “elements” who made up the “Pride of the Yankees,” have been evaluated by sport historians and most citizens.

“The Babe” has become a culture hero of the greatest magnitude despite the very obvious, serious flaws in his character, while “Larrupin’ Lou,” Ruth’s teammate, is only remembered fondly by some baseball aficionados as an excellent durable athlete with many fine personality traits. (and also by those who know what amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is!)

In assessing the role of sport, however, there have been those who assert: “we have seen the last of the athletic hero” (e.g., London, 1978). Yet, if society “needs heroes,” and if they are still emerging in ongoing societal life, is that not reason to believe that a true hero could conceivably emerge in competitive sport? Admittedly, the right (i.e., correct or appropriate) conditions would have to be present (operative in some sequential order?) for the creation (establishment) of such a person. Exactly what might these conditions be?

To obtain some tentative answers from specific scholars, in this paper the disciplines and professions of history, sociology, economics, medicine (psychiatry), anthropology, and philosophy were consulted. (The treatment of sport heroes and heroines in literature could also be analyzed, but that must wait for another time.) Here the investigator received assistance in a form that may help us understand why there seem to be very few heroes in society. Also, it may be discovered why many people are disturbed about what is occurring in sport as one of society’s highly visible collectivities. As a part of this discussion, we will be considering such questions as: (a) what factors seem to have an influence in the development of a hero or heroine at any level of society?; (b) do heroes assist in the maintenance of a desirable “moving equilibrium” in Parsons’ general action system?; (c) if culture has a need for heroes to assist
with “equilibrium maintenance,” how can sport heroes serve to fulfill society’s need in this respect?; (d) is a sequence or hierarchy of steps required for a person to achieve (i.e. to be declared) a sport hero, and (perhaps) even a folk or culture hero?; and, finally, (e) what might a model look like that could serve as a basis for further investigation?

**Insight from History**

First, turning to the discipline of history and building on the work of Barney (1985) in which he sought to establish a consensual listing of the “basic tenets” required for the “development” of a hero, the following is a brief summary of what was done. Barney reviewed and analyzed the work of Thomas Carlyle (1840), Friedrich Nietzsche (1958), Dixon Wecter (1941), Sidney Hook (1955), Daniel Boorstin (1961), Orrin Klapp (1972), and Marshall Fishwick (1969, 1975) (not to mention the ancient Greek concept of ‘arete’= virtue, meaning excellence not “sinlessness”). (Nietzsche and Hook will be discussed separately under the heading of “Insight from Philosophy.”)

As a result of his investigation, therefore, Barney (1985) concluded that the following was necessary for assessment of a man or woman as a contemporary sport hero:

A Bona Fide Sport Hero:

1. Must exemplify physical excellence in terms of health, fitness, and skill as an athlete.
2. Must exemplify moral excellence in terms of generosity, self-control, and righteousness.
3. Must exhibit social excellence in terms of protecting the community before self.
4. Must survive the judgment of time with respect to all of the above.

Thomas Carlyle (n.d.), a Scotsman who is still recognized for his interest in the role of great men in the shaping of history, has provided us with the classic description of the hero in a series of lectures given in 1840. For him, the hero was a man who took control of an evolving situation. He described their manner of appearance in our world’s business, how they have shaped themselves in the world’s history, what ideas men formed of them, what work they did... they are the leaders of men, these great ones; the modelers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or attain... the soul of the whole world’s history... (pp. 1-2)).

**Insight from Sociology**

Turning to the discipline of sociology, Johnson (1969) discussed the great importance of values and norms in a society. He explained that there were four subsystems within the total action system defined by Parsons and others (i.e., cultural system, social system, psychological system, and behavioral-organic system). Moreover, there are also four levels within that subsystem that has been identified as the social system or structure. These levels, proceeding from “highest” to “lowest,” are (a) values, (b) norms, (c) the structure of collectivities, and (d) the structure of roles. Typically the higher levels are more general than the lower ones, with the latter group giving quite specific guidance to those segments or units of the particular system to which they apply. These “units” or “segments” are either collectivities or individuals in their capacity as role occupants (e.g., the hero and—conceivably—the sports hero).
Values are, therefore, extremely important and represent the highest echelon of the social system level of the entire general action system. These values may be categorized into such "entities" as artistic values, educational values, social values (including sport values), etc. Of course, all types or categories of values must be values of personalities. The social values of a particular social system are those values that are conceived of as representative of the ideal general character that is desired by those who ultimately hold the power in the system being described. The most important social values in North America, for example, have been (1) the rule of law, (2) the socio-structural facilitation of individual achievement, and (3) the equality of opportunity (Johnson, p. 48).

**Functional Interchanges.** A society is the most nearly self-subsistent type of social system and, interestingly enough again, societies or “live systems or personalities” typically have four basic types of functional problems involving functional interchange (each with its appropriate value principle). The one that concerns us directly here is the pattern-maintenance problem that has to do with the inculcation of the value system and the maintenance of the social system’s commitment to it (Parsons, 1958). Presumably, society uses its heroes to help in pattern-maintenance. And, if they aren’t readily available—as seems to be the case at present—it creates them in various ways. Generally, therefore, these interchange processes are the means by which a society’s production factors are related, combined, and transformed with utility—the value principle of the adaptive system—as the interim product. These products “packaged” as various forms of “utility” are employed in and by other functional subsystems of the society.

In describing how each process is carried out in a social system, Zetterberg (1968) likens any such assessment to the examination of four master gauges controlling the social system. If the dial on any one gauge didn’t maintain a minimum value and fell into a “danger zone,” the whole system would fail. Conversely, when all dials are operating “safely,” any significant advancement in one problem area would need to be matched by the others. In this way a “moving equilibrium” would be maintained.

Thus, if we were to carry such theorizing further, the possible contribution of sociological theory in this vein in regard to the role of the heroic person would be as follows: a hero’s contribution to society would be in the nature of serving (disproportionately?) to help society to maintain a “moving equilibrium” among the various subsystems controlling the social system.

**Insight from Economics**

Moving from the consideration of the ideal role for a hero to fulfill, Veblen (1899), writing satirically as an economics and business theorist with heavy sociological and psychological overtones, argued that, conversely, the sports hero can emerge from activities provided within a culture for developmental purposes:

... those members of respectable society who advocate athletic games commonly justify their attitude on this head to themselves and to their neighbors on the ground that these games serve as an invaluable means of development. They not only improve the contestant’s physique, but it is commonly added that they also foster a manly
spirit, both in the participants and the spectators...

Although he sees the budding athlete as “emotionally immature,” nevertheless,
The physical vigor acquired in the training for athletic games—so far as the training may be said to have this effect—is of advantage to both the individual and the collectivity, in that, other things being equal, it conduces to serviceability. The spiritual traits which go with athletic sports are likewise economically advantageous to the individual as contradistinguished from the interests of the collectivity...

Accordingly, Veblen finds that:

Modern competition is in large a process of self-assertion on the basis of these traits of predatory human nature. In the sophisticated form in which they enter into the modern, peaceable emulation, the possession of these traits in some measure is almost a necessary of life to the civilized man... (pp. 173-175).

In assessing situation in the late 20th century, however, Cuff (1983) argued that the role of the professional athlete has not changed significantly since Veblen expressed his opinion about (largely) college and semi-professional sport. “There are more of them,” he states, “earning more money and performing for more people, but the image and the marketing of the sport is still pre-eminent, more important than the game itself” (p. 3).

Insight from Anthropology

Henry (1963), writing from an anthropological perspective, explained that “The central activity of all cultures is always a self-maximizing machine (“ego-building”), whether it be the ceremonial exchange of necklaces and arm bands as in the famous kula of the Trobriand Islands in the South Pacific, the economic competition of business in our culture, or the rat-race to get one’s articles and books published in the American academic world” (p. 191). Building on this theory, Henry explained that athletics achieves status in that the outstanding athletes on the teams generate varying quantities of “self-substance” for whomever they represent at whichever level of society. Interestingly, also, the fan is “enhanced” when the team wins, is disappointed when the team loses, but “its failure does not touch him at his core” (p. 191). In summary, sport is (can be) an important part of a community’s, school’s, university’s, state’s, or nation’s self-maximizing system.

Insight from Psychiatry

In Freud’s work there are themes of heroism and weakness. For him the hero has few doubts internally; life’s conflicts are out there in the external world, and he meets them head-on. In his sexual relationships, an aspect of life so basic in Freud’s thought, this person has a vast amount of energy potential and finds ready release for unconscious desire and conscious satisfaction of instinctual needs. In Riesman’s analysis (1954) of this subject, “the ego of the hero is in unquestioned demand, and that conflict between the conscious and the unconscious levels of the personality is at a minimum” (p. 252). This Freudian hero could well be found playing an important role in a Spartan-like manner in an Ayn Rand novel such as The Fountainhead (1960). He is oriented toward reality, and he is a “winner.” The world is very
much aware that this individual has been part of it and its development.

**Insight from Philosophy**

Shifting attention to the discipline of philosophy for possible further enlightenment, Nietzsche, the nineteenth century philosopher, appeared to view the hero as a great cultural figure in similar fashion to the position taken by Carlyle (see above). According to such theory, Providence seems to have provided for humankind at appropriate points in history. Such a great man (person) was a “world-historical” person (Hegel) through whom Reason (according to this world view) operated. This person helped to shape history for the betterment of humankind by his actions, thereby providing a noble ideal for all people to follow. Nietzsche’s Superman was “a notch above” his fellows; “what he tried above all to promote was the supremacy of the man who was best, that is healthiest and strongest in character” (Russell, 1959, p. 258).

A mid-20th-century philosopher, Sidney Hook, has made a significant contribution to the role played by the hero in history (1955). Hook’s hero is a person who has heroic qualities and then sets out deliberately to influence the course of human events in a particular sphere of action. This person is more than “Johnny on the spot” when a brave act is needed; he or she consciously brings heroic qualities to bear in order to alter the course of events in some phase of life. Status as a hero is earned within a larger social context (p. 154).

**Tiger Woods Was Caught in a Vise**

A word of caution is needed here, however, because of the obvious complexity of the decision-making process is arriving at an objective conclusion in this matter. A value criterion for greatness or “heroic stature” may be most difficult to establish. Nevertheless, because of its importance in society, we should be able to work toward different, but appropriate, definitions of a hero functioning in different spheres of social life.

A perfect example that demonstrates the extreme complexity of the subject at hand arose very recently in the case of one of the world’s top golfers, Tiger Woods. Tiger Woods, a young man in his thirties at the time, had become a household name because of his great success as a professional golfer. He was named the outstanding golf professional of the 2000-2009 decade and undoubtedly was a “golden boy” in the sporting world. However, he had been leading a double life. Presumably happily married to a beautiful Swedish wife with two lovely children, and on the way to becoming fabulously wealthy, Woods had an automobile accident outside of his home in the early hours of a morning. This mishap subsequently brought to light a tale of extraordinary, “extracurricular” sexual activity with many mistresses far and wide.

This scandal immediately became one of the top media stories of the year 2009. The public was surprised and also startled. In fairly short order, the “miscreant” felt constrained to offer a public apology and to take an indefinite leave from his work as professional gold player. The implications resulting from this move away from the “world of golf” were potentially devastating to both the future of Woods himself and to the development of the sport of golf.

*Why Was This Story So Newsworthy?* Watching this scandal mature over several months, I asked myself: “Why is this such a ‘big deal’?” Is this development so unusual in the history of the world? Haven’t various media personalities, including sport figures, experienced problems of this type before? Why is this particular incident worthy of all this attention? (Note: The
ethical aspect of his relationship with Dr. Galea in Toronto who administered PEDs in Toronto to speed up Tiger’s recovery from knee surgery is not considered here.) The answer is that this incident is not unique, but it is unusual. Yet, one wonders why has so much public attention been given to this particular situation? I believe the answer can be found in the fact that, in the past one hundred years, the role of sport in society has changed so radically. Competitive sport and related physical activity has gradually, but steadily, become a social institution that surged enormously in importance. Sport has become an extremely powerful social force that must be reckoned with from here into the indeterminate future.

Because of this upsurge in sport’s development, I have personally been attempting to analyze it from a socio-cultural perspective. It appears to be a question of the “use of” and the “abuse of” of sport. The underlying theoretical argument that can be made is as follows: Strong institutions (i.e., “forces” or “influences”) govern society. Among those social institutions are:

1. society’s values (including created norms based on these values),
2. the type of political state in vogue,
3. the prevailing economic system,
4. the religious beliefs present, etc.

To these longstanding institutions, I have over the years added such other influences as education, the communication media, science and technological advancement, concern for peace, and now sport. Of all of these, the values a society holds, and the accompanying norms developed on the basis of these values, form the strongest institution of all!

**Hard Questions About Present Social Institutions.** Social institutions are created and nurtured within a society ostensibly to further the positive development of the people living within that culture. Take democracy, for example, as a type of political institution that is currently being promoted vigorously by the United States throughout the entire world. (Of course, such worldwide change will take time!) Within this form of social development, democracy has also developed a strong relationship with economics—especially with the institution of capitalism. Economics, of course, is another vital social institution upon which a society depends fundamentally.

As world civilization developed, a great many of the world’s countries have enacted with almost messianic zeal the promotion of such social institutions as democracy, capitalism, and—now—an increasing involvement with the promotion of competitive sport. The “theory” behind such promotion is that the addition of highly competitive sport to this mix will bring about more “good” than “bad” for the people and the countries involved. However, this social experiment has raised a number of disturbing questions that society must consider.

Underlying the rampant promotion of commercialized sport, of course, is this possibly questionable alliance of democracy and rampant capitalism. Think of the example being set in North America, for example. Is there reasonable hope that this present brand of “democratic capitalism” that uses up the world’s environmental resources inordinately will somehow improve the world situation in the long run? Can we truly claim with any degree of certainty that this “mix” of democracy and capitalism (with its subsequent inclusion of big-time sport) is producing more “good” than “bad”? (Admittedly, we do need to delineate between “what’s ‘good’” and “what’s ‘bad’” more carefully). There is no escaping the fact that
the gap economically between the rich and the poor is steadily increasing. This means that “the American dream for all”—what was known as “the Enlightenment Ideal”—is beginning to look like a desert mirage for the “good, old USA”.

What Happened to the “Enlightenment Ideal”? Recall that the late 18th century was a time of political revolution when monarchies, aristocracies, and the ecclesiastical structure were being challenged on a number of fronts. In addition, the factory system was undergoing significant change at that time. Such industrial development with its greatly improved machinery “coincided with the formulation and diffusion of the modern Enlightenment idea of history as a record of progress...” Hence, this “new scientific knowledge and technological power was expected to make possible a comprehensive improvement in all of the conditions of life—social, political, moral, and intellectual as well as material” ([Leo] Marx).

This idea did slowly take hold and eventually “became the fulcrum of the dominant American worldview” (p. 5). By 1850, however, with the rapid growth of the United States especially, the idea of progress was already being dissociated from the Enlightenment vision of political and social liberation. Then, by the turn of the century (1900), “the technocratic idea of progress [had become] a belief in the sufficiency of scientific and technological innovation as the basis for general progress.” This came to mean that if scientific-based technologies were permitted to develop in an unconstrained manner, there would be an automatic improvement in all other aspects of life!

What had happened—because this theory became coupled with onrushing, unbridled capitalism—was that the ideal envisioned by Thomas Jefferson had been turned upside down! Instead of social progress being guided by such values as justice, freedom, and self-fulfillment for all, these goals of vital interest in a democracy were subjugated to a burgeoning society dominated by supposedly more important instrumental values.

As it developed, America’s chief criterion of progress has undergone a subtle but decisive change since the founding of the Republic. That change is at once a cause and a reflection of much of the current disenchantment by many with advancement in technology. Hence, the fundamental question today could well be: “Which values will win out in the long run?” Will the historical “Enlightenment Ideal” remain as an unfulfilled dream forever?

Challenging the Role of Sport in Society. Now, returning to “the Tiger Woods Saga”, we find Tiger as a prominent figure in sport, a social institution whose influence has increased phenomenally. This development has become so vast that we may now ask whether it is accomplishing what it is presumably supposed to do. Is highly competitive sport as a social phenomenon doing more good than harm in society? The world seems to have accepted as fact that it is! Yet the world community does not really know whether this contention is true or not. Sport’s expansion is permitted and encouraged almost without question in all quarters. “Sport is good for people, and more involvement with sport of almost any type—extreme sport, professional wrestling, missed martial arts, ‘world cups’—is better” seems to be the conventional wisdom. Witness, in addition, the billions of dollars that are being removed neatly out of tax revenues for the several Olympic enterprises perennially.

As I analyzed the “Tiger Woods Saga,” I found it impossible to avoid a critique of commercialized sport as well. I believe that the development is now such that society should be striving to keep sport’s drawbacks and/or excesses in check to the greatest possible extent.
In recent decades we have witnessed the rise of sport throughout the land to the status of a fundamentalist religion. For example, we find sport being called upon to serve as a “redeemer of wayward youth,” but—as it is occurring elsewhere—I believe it is also becoming a destroyer of certain fundamental values of individual and social life.

Wilcox, for example, in his empirical analysis, challenged “the widely held notion that sport can fulfill an important role in the development of national character.” He stated: “the assumption that sport is conducive to the development of positive human values, or the ‘building of character,’ should be viewed more as a belief rather than as a fact.” He concluded that sport did “provide some evidence to support a relationship between participation in sport and the ranking of human values” (1991, pp. 3, 17, 18, respectively).

Assuming Wilcox’s view has reasonable validity, those involved in any way in the institution of sport—if they all together may be considered a collectivity—should contribute a quantity of redeeming social value to our North American culture, not to mention the overall world culture (i.e., a quantity of good leading to improved societal well-being). On the basis of this argument, the following two questions can be postulated for response by concerned agencies and individuals (e.g., federal governments, state and provincial officials, philosophers in the discipline and related professions):

1. Can, does, or should a great (i.e., leading) nation produce great sport?
2. With the world being threatened environmentally in a variety of ways, should we now be considering the “ecology” of sport as we are doing with other human activity? Both the beneficial and disadvantageous aspects of a particular sporting activity should be studied through the endeavors of scholars in various disciplines as well?

3. If it is indeed the case that the guardian of the “functional satisfaction” resulting from sport is (a) the sports person, (b) the spectator, (c) the businessperson who gains monetarily, (d) the sport manager, and, in some instances, (e) educational administrators and their respective governing boards, then who in society should be in a position to be the most knowledgeable about the immediate objectives and long range aims of sport and related physical activity?

Answering these questions is a complex matter. First, as stated above, sport and related physical activity have become an extremely powerful social force in society. Secondly, if we grant that sport now has significant power in all world cultures—a power indeed that appears to be growing—we should also recognize that any such social force affecting society is dangerous if perverted (e.g., through an excess of nationalism or commercialism). With this in mind, I am arguing further that sport has somehow achieved such status as a powerful societal institution without an adequately defined underlying theory. Somehow, most countries seem to be proceeding generally on a typically unstated assumption that “sport is a good thing for society to encourage, and more sport is even better!” And yet, as explained above, the term “sport” exhibits radical ambiguity based on both everyday usage and dictionary definition. This obviously adds even more to the present problem and accompanying confusion.

This “radical ambiguity” about the role of sport takes us back to “the Tiger Woods Saga”. Sport has now become a powerful social institution exerting influence for the betterment
of society. Then, all of a sudden, a “sport hero” of the highest magnitude behaves himself in such a way that basic societal values are challenged. Hence, we now must ask ourselves: “Specifically what are the values that Tiger has forsaken that have occasioned this world-wide outburst of publicity”?

“Socio-Instrumental”, Material Values or “Moral”, Non-Material Values? Examining this matter carefully, we may be surprised to learn that sport’s contribution to human wellbeing is a highly complicated matter. On the one side, there are those who claim that sport contributes significantly to the development of what are regarded as the socio-economic, material values—that is, the values of teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, aggressiveness, and perseverance consonant with prevailing corporate capitalism in democracy and in other political systems as well. In the process of making this “contribution,” however, we discover also that there is now a good deal of evidence that in the process of contributing to the “global ideal” of capitalism, democracy, and advancing technology, sport has developed an ideal that opposes the historical, fundamental moral, non-material values of honesty, fairness, good will, sportsmanship, and responsibility in the innumerable competitive experiences provided (Lumpkin, Stoll, and Beller, 1999).

Significant to this discussion are the results of investigations carried out by Hahm, Stoll, Beller, Rudd, and others in recent years. The Hahm-Beller Choice Inventory (HBVCI) has now been administered to athletes at different levels in a variety of venues. It demonstrates conclusively that athletes are increasingly not supporting what is considered “the moral ideal” in competition. As Stoll and Beller (1998) reported, for example, an athlete with moral character demonstrates the moral character traits of honesty, fair play, respect, and responsibility whether an official is present to enforce the rules or not. (Priest, Krause, and Beach substantiated this finding in 1999). They reported that changes over a four-year period in a college athlete’s ethical value choices were consistent with other investigations. Their findings showed decreases in “sportsmanship orientation” and an increase in “professional” attitudes associated with sport bespeaking so-called “social” values.

Aha! We have now arrived at the nub of the matter! Alas for poor Tiger Woods… His plight was that he was “caught” right in the middle of this ongoing controversy about the presumed contribution of sport to world society. No matter which way he turned, he was “out of step” with the claims for sport made by either group. His actions clashed with those who say that sport contributes to socio-economic, material values. So Tiger “couldn’t win for losing” for quite a while after his marital woes became public knowledge! On the one hand he had confounded those who argue for “the socio-instrumental-values contribution”, and–on the other hand–he had betrayed those who promote sport because it makes “a moral-values contribution”.

Note: Please note that I am recommending a change in the terminology used. The distinction made between the two types of values has been most insightful. However, I believe that the term “socio-economic”—rather than simply “socio-instrumental” (or even “material”) reflects more accurately what has taken place in society.

Resultantly, advertisers deserted Tiger “in droves” because his commercial value to them
has been tarnished perhaps irrevocably. The gross stock value of his many sponsors decreased appreciably since Tiger was “exposed” as having “done something” that clashed with societal mores. The sport hero, that staunch fellow presumably with all of those fine moral values, had betrayed his fans young and old because of his presumed “nocturnal peregrinations.” Hence, as it turned out, “Woe was Tiger” to a considerable degree! Interestingly, since the above words about Tiger Woods were written, he has made a remarkable comeback and is now ranked #1 in the golfing world again. (I am writing these words in mid-April, 2013) And, most interestingly, most of the fans do indeed appear to have forgiven him for his personal indiscretions that were publicized so blatantly in the media in all parts of the world.

Tables and Figure Used to Ascertain the Status of Sport Hero

Finally, based on the admittedly, not fully comprehensive material gleaned from this amalgam of scholarly inputs, along with the consideration of the complex Tiger Woods case, the following preliminary model was devised to describe this social phenomenon based on possible knowledge and wisdom gleaned from the representative of these scholarly fields. This proposed model is quite different from the “hypothetical model” or consensual listing proposed by Barney of qualities and/or characteristics required for “judging contemporary candidates for sport heroism” correctly or adequately. A logical—even though embryonic—model is designed as an empirical system to the greatest possible extent. Accordingly it must have boundaries corresponding to the social system being described. This means that boundary-determining criteria are required initially so that the same initial conditions can (presumably) be correlated finally. These criteria are succinctly indicated below based on the above explanation as (1) 19th & 20th Centuries Analyses of Necessary Qualities for Sport Hero Designation, (2) Society’s Values & Norms, (3) Personal Situation (Internal Pressures), and (4) Social Situation (External Pressures) (see Tables 1, 2, 3, & 4 below).

\[
\text{TABLE 1}
\]

| PAST EXPERIENCE: 19TH & 20TH CENTURIES |
| ANALYSES OF NECESSARY QUALITIES FOR SPORT HERO |
| DESIGNATION RECOMMENDED by R.K. BARNEY |

1. **MUST EXEMPLIFY PHYSICAL EXCELLENCE** in terms of health, fitness, and skill as an athlete.
2. **MUST EXEMPLIFY MORAL EXCELLENCE** in terms of generosity, self-control, and righteousness.
3. **MUST EXHIBIT SOCIAL EXCELLENCE** in terms of protecting the interests of the community before self.
4. **MUST SURVIVE THE JUDGEMENT OF TIME WITH RESPECT TO ALL OF THE ABOVE.**

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TABLE 2

SOCIETY’S (THE UNITED STATES’)
VALUE AND NORMS (AS DESIGNATED
from
HARRY M. JOHNSON)

SYSTEM LEVEL OF THE ENTIRE GENERAL ACTION SYSTEM. PARSONS CATEGORIZES VALUES (E.G., SCIENTIFIC VALUES, ARTISTIC VALUES, [SPORT VALUES?], AND VALUES FOR PERSONALITIES VALUES - THIS IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE SOCIAL).

SOCIAL VALUES ARE CONCEPTIONS OF THE IDEAL GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE TYPE OF SOCIAL SYSTEM IN QUESTION. FOR THE U.S., IMPORTANT SOCIETAL VALUES ARE:

(1) THE RULE OF LAW
(2) THE SOCIAL STRUCTURAL FACILITATION OF INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT
(3) THE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

NORMS - SHARED SANCTIONED NORMS ARE THE SECOND LEVEL OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE. IN THE U.S., EXAMPLES OF NORMS ARE:

(1) THE INSTITUTIONS OF PRIVATE PROPERTY
(2) PRIVATE ENTERPRISE
(3) THE MONOGAMOUS CONJUGAL FAMILY
(4) THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE
TABLE 3

PERSONAL SITUATION (INTERNAL PRESSURES)

“OPINIONS, ATTITUDES, AND BELIEFS ARE MORE DIFFERENTIATED IN MORE COMPLEX SOCIETIES” (BERELSON & STEINER, 1964, P. 559) (REPEATED IN BOTH TABLES 3 AND 4).

“THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN OPINIONS, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS THAT DERIVE FROM THE SOCIAL STRATA IN WHICH PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES OR FROM THE SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT THEY HAVE” (P. 570).

“PEOPLE HOLD OPINIONS, ATTITUDES, AND BELIEFS IN HARMONY WITH THEIR GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND IDENTIFICATION” (BERELSON & STEINER, 1964, P. 566).


“OAB’S WITHIN A GROUP ARE PARTICULARLY SUBJECT TO INFLUENCE BY THE MOST RESPECTED AND PRESTIGIOUS MEMBER OF THE GROUP, THE OPINION LEADERS” (P. 569).

“PEOPLE TEND TO MISPERCEIVE AND MISINTERPRET PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR OWN PREDISPOSITIONS, BY EVADING THE MESSAGE OR BY DISTORTING IT IN A FAVORABLE DIRECTION” (P. 536).

OAB’S, AND ESPECIALLY BELIEFS, CHANGE MORE SLOWLY THAN ACTUAL BEHAVIOR” (P. 576).

“THE MORE INTERESTED PEOPLE ARE IN AN ISSUE, THE MORE LIKELY THEY ARE TO HOLD CONSISTENT POSITIONS ON THAT ISSUE” (P. 574).

“AS A CHILD GROWS UP, HE GROWS AWAY FROM THE ORIGINAL PARENTAL INFLUENCE TO THE EXTENT THAT HE COMES INTO CONTACT WITH NEW WAYS OF LIFE, NEW SOCIAL GROUPS, NEW COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS, ETC.” (P. 564).

“WHEN PEOPLE’S OAB’S DO NOT HANG TOGETHER HARMONIOUSLY, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO CHANGE SOME OF THEM” (P. 578).

NOTE: BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF DETERMINING WHERE INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY “LEAVES OFF” AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY “BEGIN,” SEVERAL FINDINGS ABOUT HUMAN BEHAVIOR ARE REPEATED IN BOTH TABLE 3 AND TABLE 4.
TABLE 4
SOCIAL SITUATION (EXTERNAL PRESSURES)

“OPINIONS, ATTITUDES, AND BELIEFS ARE MORE DIFFERENTIATED IN MORE
COMPLEX SOCIETIES” (BERELSON & STEINER, 1964, P. 559).

“GIVEN CONSISTENT SUPPORT FROM HISTORICAL, PARENTAL, GROUP AND
STRATA CHARACTERISTICS, OAB’S ARE UNLIKELY TO CHANGE AT ALL” (P.575).

“FOR A POPULATION AS A WHOLE, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE
LASTING DEVELOPMENT OF OPINIONS, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS THAT IS
INDEPENDENT OF PARENTAL, GROUP, OR STRATA PREDISPOSITIONS AND IS
BASED MAINLY ON ‘OBJECTIVE’ OR ‘RATIONAL’ ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION
AND IDEAS” (P. 574).

“PEOPLE HOLD OAB’S IN HARMONY WITH THEIR GROUP MEMBERSHIPS AND
IDENTIFICATIONS” (P. 566).

“THE USE, AND PERHAPS THE EFFECTIVENESS, OF DIFFERENT MEDIA
VARIES WITH THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE AUDIENCE—THE HIGHER
THE EDUCATION, THE GREATER THE RELIANCE ON PRINT; THE LOWER THE
EDUCATION, THE GREATER THE RELIANCE ON AURAL AND PICTURE MEDIA.
THE BETTER EDUCATED ARE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS TO PAY ATTENTION
TO SERIOUS COMMUNICATIONS DEALING WITH AESTHETIC OR MORAL OR
EDUCATIONAL ISSUES” (P. 533).

“THE MASS MEDIA EXERCISE AN IMPORTANT INDIRECT INFLUENCE
THROUGH ‘OPINION LEADERS’—THOSE TRUSTED AND INFORMED PEOPLE
WHO EXIST IN VIRTUALLY ALL PRIMARY GROUPS” (P. 550).

“THE HIGHER A PERSON’S LEVEL OF INTELLIGENCE, THE MORE LIKELY IT IS
THAT HE WILL ACQUIRE INFORMATION FROM COMMUNICATION” (P. 544).

“THE MORE TRUSTWORTHY, CREDIBLE, OR PRESTIGIOUS THE
COMMUNICATOR IS PERCEIVED TO BE, THE LESS MANIPULATIVE HIS INTENT
IS CONSIDERED TO BE AND THE GREATER THE IMMEDIATE TENDENCY TO
ACCEPT HIS CONCLUSIONS” (P. 537).

“THE ATTRIBUTION OF A POSITION TO ‘MAJORITY OPINION’ IS ITSELF
EFFECTIVE IN CHANGING ATTITUDES WHEN THE AUDIENCE RESPECTS THE
GROUP FROM WHICH THE MAJORITY IS TAKEN” (P. 538).

“AS FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, WHAT IS TYPICALLY LEARNED OR PASSED ON,
FROM FATHER (USUALLY) TO CHILD, IS NOT SO MUCH IDEOLOGY AS A PARTY
AFFILIATION” (P. 564).

“OAB’S ARE MORE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WHEN PEOPLE ARE SUBJECT TO
CROSS–PRESSURES” (P. 580).

“PEOPLE RESPOND TO PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION IN LINE WITH THEIR
PRESENT PREDISPOSITION, AND THEY CHANGE OR RESIST CHANGE
ACCORDINGLY” (P. 540)
In Figure 1 (see below), the common syllogism was used as an illustration of units that share the same boundary-determining criteria (Dubin, 1978, pp. 125-142). Thus: “All people have opinions, attitudes, and beliefs [they think!]; a potential sport hero is one person functioning within the total population; therefore, people are in a position to form opinions, attitudes, and beliefs about the qualities of such a person.” Also, those historical, social, and individual factors were employed with appropriate headings (as explained in Tables 1-4 inclusive) as they appear to influence a person’s eventual designation as hero by the society in which he or she lives.

One of the first things that became clear was the extreme complexity of such a designation in an open society (e.g., the United States, Canada, certain European countries). North American culture, for example, is characterized by pluralistic philosophies with departmental philosophies subsumed under each recognizable philosophic position. Obviously, the impact of the various components (e.g., society’s values and norms) of the model would be quite different in a managed society characterized by a more authoritarian form of government. When a democratic society decides that so-and-so is a sport hero, this is the result of a great many factors, influences, and relationships that at certain points become an intricate network. Thus, arriving at the final designation by society is a highly complex matter and is obviously the result of a great many determinants of greater or lesser importance. To grasp one or two such factors and state that “it was either this or that which brought about John Jones’ or Mary Smith’s designation as a sport hero in the community of Plainville, Nebraska is to truly misunderstand the problem.” Some time in the future, someone may attempt to determine the relative weighting of the various determinants by factor analysis—but even then the reader probably shouldn’t bet on the infallible accuracy of such a determination.

Even though dictionaries define social character similarly, sport practitioners, including participants, coaches, parents, and officials, have gradually come to believe that character is defined properly by such values as self-sacrifice, teamwork, loyalty, and perseverance. The common expression in competitive sport is: “He or she showed character”—meaning “He/she ‘hung in there’ to the bitter end!” [or

![FIGURE 1](image-url)

**FIGURE 1**

**FACTORS INFLUENCING SPORT HERO DESIGNATION IN TODAY’S WORLD**

**SOCIETY’S PRESENT VALUES & NORMS**

**19TH & 20TH HISTORICAL ANALYSES**

**INFLUENCE OF**

**PERSONAL**

**EXTERNAL**

**SITUATION**

**(INTERNAL PRESSURES)**

**(SOCIAL PRESSURES)**

**DESIGNATION AS A SPORT HERO!**

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Rudd et al. (1999) confirmed that coaches explained character as “work ethic and commitment.” This coincides with what sport sociologists have found. Sage (1998, p. 614) explained: “Mottoes and slogans such as ‘sports builds character’ must be seen in the light of their ideological issues.” In other words, competitive sport is structured by the nature of the society in which it occurs. This would appear to mean that over-commercialization, drug-taking, cheating, bribe-taking by officials, violence, etc. at all levels of sport are simply reflections of the culture in which we live.

Where does all of this leave us today as we consider sport’s presumed relationship with moral character development and with social character development? Whatever your conclusion may be, Tiger Woods had been unexpectedly trapped in this social-moral character vise that characterizes sport participation at the beginning of the 21st century. He tried to “have it both ways”. For his and his family’s sake, let us hope that he will learn from this tragic experience—and “the world” seems to be ready to “forgive his sins”...

**Concluding Statement**

Times are indeed changing. Whereas at various times throughout history, the world had its Hercules, Samson, Beowulf, and Siegfried, Stark (1987) concluded that, in Western culture, Stallone (whether Rocky or Rambo) served to reinforce our conception of the heroes who emerged in recent years. “Many scholars, for example, place Mr. Stallone squarely in the footsteps of John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and say his heroes display much of the same rugged, macho individualism as the old heroes of westerns...” (p, 19). These are examples of how one individual reacted to a world where society has lost control and thereby has failed its citizens.

Frankly, this topic of sport hero was examined because it does seem that this question is unclear in the minds of most citizens, young or old, including the athletes themselves. People need to understand through use of their own rational powers that they are being increasingly lured or marketed daily by others into reactions dominated more by emotions than reason. It may well be necessary to reinforce ego at the various geographical levels (i.e. community, region, state or province, nation) by the creation of heroes in the various aspects of social living (including sport). To what extent this should be done through the artificial creation of Superman, Wonder Woman, Rambo, Spiderman, and Indiana Jones is debatable. In addition, as it developed and was mentioned above, even Tiger Woods defaulted after having achieved “superstar” but not hero status. However, it may serve a beneficial purpose when such individuals do not appear normally in the course of ongoing events.

Further, if this is what is happening in competitive sport, we might ask to what extent highly competitive sport is indeed a “socially useful servant” today? We know how difficult it is to make a case for the building of desirable character and personality traits through the medium of sport. Our values often seem to have become so perverted that we condone certain unsportsmanlike and illegal actions in sport and athletics at any level, and then turn right around and condemn, fine, and even send to jail people who display similar behavior in everyday life? Permitting unethical and illegal behavior in sport is a serious mistake. Intelligent, influential people must become very concerned about this anomaly in social life. Competitive sport has become an increasingly important social force in the world—almost too great an
influence if this is possible. Further, culture heroes are truly hard to come by these days. If we really believe that sport has an important contribution to make to the development of a fine society, is it not time to give the highest reward and acclaim to whose who demonstrate through sport both a high degree of athletic ability and the finest of personality and character traits. We should give high priority to bringing about a change in the present state of affairs as soon as possible.

Scott Silvers, of Kansas City, Missouri, in a letter to Sports Illustrated in the late 20th century (Oct. 29, 1984) about Walter Payton’s (a Chicago Bear) new rushing record in professional football, stated: “I’m sure that many of your readers will be nominating him for Sportsman of the Year. Nobody deserves it more... The term ‘sportsman’ implies traits that go beyond athleticism: humility, kindness, generosity. A true sportsman is someone who combines these personal attributes with athletic ability...” (p. 110). Adding a “hero connotation” to this to me implies the addition of extraordinary courage or ability, admired for “brave deeds and noble qualities.” If sport participants such as this were given the type of recognition they deserve, we would be in a much better position to argue logically that highly competitive sport is indeed an important useful social force. However, if we continue to condone (as we often look the other way) distasteful, unsportsmanlike, overly mercenary actions in sport, we are simply affirming the negative aspects of sport as an entertainment device in an otherwise (presumably) boring existence.

Finally, it may well be an important responsibility of sport historians to help people separate the true heroes and heroines from the celebrities. We have a condition prevailing in which the media offer us the “packaged hero” for consumption. Fishwick told us (1975) that the hero is a reflection of the place and the era in which he lives. Thus, despite the fact that the media needs celebrity figures to sell their wares, and despite the fact that politicians need a variety of symbols that are somehow supposed to reflect glory on them, the people themselves must insist that heroes and heroines, in sport or any other aspect of life, truly reflect the finest societal values that we proclaim for our culture. As London (1978) stated, “The hero is an extinct species relegated to the memory of my youthful idealism... This is the age of the superstar, not the hero. And superstars specialize in self-adulation, not sacrifice.” In one of her well-known songs, songstress Peggy Lee said it all with one plaintive question—”Is that all there is?”
PART V

On What Basis Should a Country Support the Olympic Games

Following up on the sport hero discussion of Part IV, I decided to add a discussion about the Olympic Games at this point. Many people attribute “sport hero status” to those men and women who win gold medals at these quadrennial sport contests. However there’s also a vocal minority who believe that calling these athletes “heroes” is ridiculous, and that operating the Olympic Games should be abolished unless radical change is made. There’s another minority, including the Games officials and the athletes, who presumably feel the enterprise is doing just fine. Finally, there’s a larger minority undoubtedly solidly behind the commercial aspects of the undertaking. They have a good thing going; they liked the Games the way they are developing—the bigger, the better! Finally, there’s the vast majority to whom the Olympics are either interesting, somewhat interesting, or a bore. This “vast majority,” if the Games weren’t there every four years, would probably agree that the world would go on just the same, and some other social phenomenon would take up their leisure time.

The people love a spectacle. For example, the 2000 Olympic Games held in Sydney, Australia were a spectacle, from start to finish. Sydney, Australia evidently wanted worldwide recognition. Without doubt, Sydney got recognition! The world’s outstanding athletes wanted the opportunity to demonstrate their excellence. From all reports they had such an occasion to their hearts’ and abilities’ content. The International Olympic Committee, along with their counterparts in each of the 200-plus participating nations, earnestly desired the show to go on; it went on with a bang! Obviously, Sydney spent an enormous amount of money and energy to finance and otherwise support this extravaganza and surrounding competition. The IOC and its affiliates will presumably remain solvent for another four years, while Sydney contemplates its involvement with this enormous event and its aftermath. “Problem, what problem?” most people in the public sector would assuredly ask if they were confronted with such a question.

The Problem

This analysis revolves around the criticisms of the “abolish the Games group.” Sir William Rees-Mogg (1988, pp. 7-8) is one of the Olympic Movement’s most vituperative opponents. (Note the date when this was written!) He believed the problem is of enormous magnitude. In fact, he listed fifteen sub-problems in no particular order of importance except for the first criticism that set the tone for the remainder: “The Olympic Games have become a grotesque jamboeree of international hypocrisy. Whatever idealism they once had has been lost. The Games now stand for some of the things which are most rotten and corrupt in the modern world, for prestige, nationalism, publicity, prejudice, bureaucracy, and the exploitation of talent” (p. 7).

It would not be appropriate to enumerate here in great detail the remaining 14 problems and issues brought forward by Rees-Mogg. Simply put, however, he stated: “The Games have been taken over by a vulgar nationalism, in place of the spirit of internationalism for which
they were revived” (p.7). He decried also that, in addition to promoting racial intolerance, “the objectives of many national Olympic programmes is the glorification and self-assertion of totalitarian state regimes,” often “vile regimes guilty of many of the crimes which the Olympic Games are supposed to outlaw” (p. 7).

Rees-Mogg decried further “The administration of the Olympic Games [that] is politically influenced and morally bankrupt” (p. 7). Additionally, at this point, he asserted: “the international bureaucracies of several sports have become among the most odious of the world.” In this respect he lashed out especially at tennis, chess, cricket, and track and field. Still further, he charged that threats by countries to boycott the Olympics have time and again made it a political arena akin to the United Nations.

The messenger had not yet completed his message. Rees-Mogg condemned “the worship of professionally abnormal muscular development,” and stated that it is “a form of idolatry to which ordinary life is often sacrificed” (p. 7). Since these words were written, these problems have assuredly not been corrected. They have actually worsened (e.g., ever-more drugs to enhance performance, bribery of officials assigned to site selection). The entire problem of drug ingestion to promote bodily development for enhanced performance has now become legendary. Couple this with over-training begun at early ages in selected sports for both boys and girls, and it can be argued safely that natural, all-round development has been thwarted for a great many young people, not to mention the fact that only a minute number makes it through to “Olympic glory.” More could be said, but the point has been made. Basically, Rees-Mogg has claimed that it has become a world “in which good values are taken by dishonest men and put to shameful uses” (p. 8).

Social Forces as Value Determinants

In the present discussion about the Olympic Games, it may be worthwhile to first take a brief look at the “Olympic Games Problem” from the standpoint of the discipline of sociology. This is because in an analysis such as this, the investigator soon realizes the importance of the major social forces (e.g., values, economics, religion) as determinants of the direction a society may take at any given moment. Sociology can indeed help with the question of values. For example, Parsons’s complex theory of social action can be used to place any theory of social or individual values in perspective. His general action system is composed of four major analytically separable subsystems: (a) the cultural system, (b) the social system, (c) the psychological system, and (d) the system of the behavioral organism. The theory explains how these subsystems compose a hierarchy of societal control and conditioning (Johnson, 1969, pp. 46-58; Johnson, 1994, pp. 57 et ff).

The cultural system at the top in the action-theory hierarchy provides the basic structure and its components, in a sense, thereby, programming the complete action system. The social system is next in descending order; it has to be more or less harmoniously related to the functional problems of social systems. The same holds for the structure and functional problems of the third level, the psychological system (personality), and the fourth level, the system of the behavioral organism. Further, the subsystem of culture exercises “control” over the social system, and so on up and down the scale. Legitimization is provided to the level below or “pressure to conform” if there is inconsistency. Thus, there is a “strain toward
consistency” among the system levels, led and controlled from above downwards.

What is immediately important to keep in mind is that there are four levels of structure within the social system itself (e.g., Hong Kong as a social system within Southeast Asia and, more recently, in a developing relationship with Mainland China’s culture). Moving from the highest to the lowest level, i.e., from the general to the more specific, we again find four levels that are designated as (a) values, (b) norms, (c) the structure of collectivities, and (d) the structure of roles. All of these levels are normative in that the social structure is composed of sanctioned cultural limits within which certain types of behavior are mandatory or acceptable. Keeping in mind for the present discussion that values are at the top—the highest level—and that there are many categories of values (scientific, artistic, sport, and values for personalities, etc.). These social values—including sport values too, of course—are simply assessments of the ideal general character for the social system in question. Finally, the basic point to keep in mind here is that individual values about sport will inevitably be “conditioned” by the social values prevailing in any given culture. In other words, there will be very strong pressure to conform.

Use of the Term “Value” in Philosophy

Moving from the discipline of sociology to that of philosophy, the investigator will use the term “value” as equivalent to the concepts of “worth” and “goodness.” The opposite of these terms (i.e., “evil”) will be referred to as “disvalue.” It is possible, also, to draw a distinction between two kinds of value; namely, intrinsic value and extrinsic value. When a human experience has intrinsic value, therefore, it is good or valuable in itself—i.e., an end in itself. An experience that has extrinsic value is one that brings about goodness or value also, but such goodness or value serves as a means to the achievement of something or some gain in life.

One of the four major subdivisions of philosophy has been called axiology (or the study of values). Until philosophy’s so-called “Age of Analysis” became so strongly entrenched in the Western world at least, it was argued typically that the study of values was the end result of philosophizing as a process. It was argued that a person should develop a system of values consistent with his/her beliefs in the subdivisions of metaphysics (questions about reality), epistemology (acquisition of knowledge), and logic (exact relating of ideas). Some believed that values existed only because of the interest of the “valuer” (the interest theory). The existence theory, conversely, held that values exist independently in the universe, although they are important in a vacuum, so to speak. They could be considered as essence added to existence, so to speak. A pragmatist (e.g., an experimentalist) views value in a significantly different manner (the experimentalist theory). Here values that yield practical results that have “cash value” bring about the possibility of greater happiness through more effective values in the future. One further theory, the part-whole theory, is explained by the idea that effective relating of parts to the whole creates the highest values (Zeigler, 1989, pp. 29-31).

Domains of Value Under Axiology

The study of ethics under axiology considers morality, conduct, good and evil, and ultimate objectives in life. There are a number of approaches to the problem of whether life, as humans know it, is worthwhile. Some people are eternally hopeful (optimism), while
others wonder whether life is worth the struggle (pessimism). In between these two extremes there is the golden mean (meliorism) that would have humans facing life boldly while striving constantly to improve one’s situation. In the latter instance it is not possible to make final decisions about whether good or evil will prevail in the world.

A second most important question under ethics is what is most important in life for the individual. This is a fundamental question, of course, in this discussion about human values in relation to the Olympic Games. What is the ultimate end of a person’s existence? Some would argue that pleasure is the highest good (hedonism). One position or approach under hedonism as understood in modern history is known as utilitarianism. Here society becomes the focus, not the individual. The basic idea is to promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number in the community. Another important way of looking at the summun bonum (or highest good) in life is called perfectionism. With such an approach the individual is aiming for complete self-realization, and a similar goal is envisioned for society as well.

A logical progression following from an individual’s decision about the greatest good in life is the standard of conduct that he or she sets for the “practice of living” one’s life to its fullest. A naturalistic approach would not have a person do anything that leads to self-destruction; self-preservation is basic. In the late 18th century in Germany, Immanuel Kant, known as a philosophical idealist, felt that a person should act on only what should be considered a universal law. Similarly, orthodox religion decrees that humans must obey God’s wishes, a number of “commands” that have been decreed with a purpose for all humankind. The philosophy that became known as Pragmatism, defined loosely, suggests a “trial run” in a person’s imagination first to discover the possible consequences of any planned actions.

I continue with this line of philosophic thought a bit further because of the obvious relationship it has to people who have an involvement with the Olympic Games in one way or another (i.e., as participant, official, coach, governing body member, advertiser, governmental official, what have you?), Certain interests we develop are apt to guide people’s conduct in life. Those who are too self-centered are egotistical (egoism), while those who feel their life purpose is to serve others are called altruistic (altruism). Many would argue, however, that Aristotle’s concept of the “golden mean” should be deemed best—that is, a desirable aim for a person to fulfill with his or her life span.

There are, of course other areas of value under the axiology subdivision of philosophy over ethics that treats moral conduct (e.g., aesthetics, that has to do with the “feelings” aspects of a human’s conscious life). Further, because there has been an emerging need to define the concept of values in the life of humans, specialized philosophies of education and religion have developed, for example. This applies, for example, to a sub-department of the mother discipline of philosophy that has become known as sport philosophy. In sport philosophy, people would presumably make decisions about the kind, nature, and worth of values that are intrinsic to, say, the involvement of people in sport whether defined as amateur, semi-professional, or professional.

**An Assessment of the Problem**

The problem, the author believes, is this: opportunities for participation in all competitive sport—not just Olympic sport—moved historically from amateurism to semi-professionalism,
and then on to full-blown professionalism. The Olympic Movement, because of a variety of social pressures, followed suit in both ancient times and in the present. When the International Olympic Committee gave that final push to the pendulum and openly admitted professional athletes to play in the Games, they may have pleased most of the spectators and all of the advertising and media representatives. Yet in so doing the floodgates were opened completely, and the original ideals upon which the Games were reactivated in 1896 were completely abandoned. This is what caused Sir Rees-Mogg to state that crass commercialism had won the day. This final abandonment of any semblance of what was the original Olympic ideal was the “straw that broke the camel’s back.” This ultimate decision regarding eligibility for participation has indeed been devastating to those people who earnestly believe that money and sport are like oil and water; they simply do not mix! Their response has been to abandon any further interest in, or support for, the entire Olympic Movement.

The question must, therefore be asked: “What should rampant professionalism in competitive sport at the Olympic Games mean to any given country out of the 200 plus nations involved?” This is not a simple question to answer responsibly. In this present brief statement, it should be made clear that the professed social values of a country should ultimately prevail—and they will prevail in the final analysis. However, this ultimate determination will not take place over night. The fundamental social values of a social system will eventually have a strong influence on the individual values held by most citizens in that country, also. If a country is moving toward the most important twin values of equalitarianism and achievement, for example, what implications does that have for competitive sport in that political entity under consideration? The following are some questions that should be asked before a strong continuing commitment is made to sponsor such involvement through governmental and/or private funding:

1. Can it be shown that involvement in competitive sport at one or the other of the three levels (i.e., amateur, semi-professional, professional) brings about desirable social values (i.e., more value than disvalue)?

2. Can it be shown that involvement in competitive sport at one of the three levels (i.e., amateur, semiprofessional, or professional) brings about desirable individual values of both an intrinsic and extrinsic nature (i.e., creates more value than disvalue)?

3. If the answer to Questions #1 and #2 immediately are both affirmative (i.e., that involvement in competitive sport at any or all of the three levels postulated [i.e., amateur, semi-professional, and professional sport] provides a sufficient amount of social and individual value to warrant such promotion), can sufficient funds be made available to support or permit this promotion at any or all of the three levels listed?

If funding to support participation in competitive sport at any or all of the three levels (amateur, semiprofessional, professional) is not available (or such participation is not deemed advisable), should priorities—as determined by the expressed will of the people—be established about the importance of each level to the country based on careful analysis of the potential social and individual values that may accrue to the society and its citizens from such competitive sport participation at one or more levels?
**Concluding Statement**

In this analysis I have asked whether a country should be involved with, or continue involvement with, the ongoing Olympic Movement—as well as all competitive sport—*unless the people in that country first answer some basic questions*. These questions ask to what extent such involvement can be related to the social and individual values that the country holds as important for all of its citizens. Initially, and then subsequently at intervals, study is needed to determine whether sport competition at either or all of the three levels (i.e., amateur, semi-professional, and professional) does indeed provide positive social and individual value (i.e., more value than disvalue) in the country concerned. Then careful assessment—through the efforts of qualified social scientists and philosophers—should be made of the populace’s opinions and basic beliefs about such involvement. If participation in competitive sport at each of the three levels can make this claim to being a social institution that provides positive value to the country, these efforts should be supported to the extent possible—including the sending of a team to future Olympic Games. *If sufficient funding for the support of all three levels of participation is not available, from either governmental or private sources, the expressed will of the people should be established to determine what priorities will be invoked.*
PART VI

Achieving the “Right Balance” in Character-Trait Development Through Competitive Sport

What implications does this challenge have for the management of sport as it moves along in the twenty-first century? Initially, I believe it is fair to say that there are strong indications that sport’s earlier, presumed role in the “adventure” of civilization is not being fulfilled in the most desirable way as the world’s population struggles to meet its many challenges. Kavussanu & Roberts (Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 2001) showed, for example, that even though “sport participation is widely regarded as an important opportunity for character development,” it is also true that sport “occurs in a context that values ego orientation (i.e.: ‘winning IS the most important thing’).

So we may well ask, “What indeed is actually competitive sport’s contribution to society today?” We might be surprised at the answer we get—or perhaps not. Actually there is evidence now that sport is contributing significantly to a socio-achievement type of character development that values teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and perseverance. And, as you might surmise, these traits are consonant with success in democratic society employing burgeoning corporate capitalism and in other political systems as well (e.g. China).

In an effort to resolve this argument, the Hahm-Beller Choice Inventory (HBVCI) had been administered earlier to athletes at different levels in a variety of venue. It demonstrated conclusively that present-day sport competition does indeed promote what I have stated. Therefore, the way commercialized, typically overemphasized sport has been operated, it can now probably be argued that competitive sport is indeed supporting less what have been considered “the moral ideal” in sport competition. This finding was further substantiated by Priest, Krause, and Beach (1999) who reported that their findings in the four-year changes in college athlete’s ethical value choices were consistent with other investigations. They showed decreases in “sportsmanship orientation” and an increase in so-called “professional” attitudes associated with sport.

What Kind of “Character” Does Sport Build?

The evidence is mounting, therefore, that sport practitioners, including participants, coaches, parents, and officials, have come to believe that character is defined more properly by such values as self-sacrifice, teamwork, loyalty, and perseverance. The common expression in competitive sport is: “He/she showed character”—meaning “He/she ‘hung in there’ to the bitter end!” [or whatever]. Rudd (1999) confirmed that coaches explained character as “work ethic and commitment.” This coincides also with what sport sociologists have found. Sage (1998. p. 614) explained: “Mottoes and slogans such as ‘sports builds character’ must be seen in the light of their ideological issues” In other words, competitive sport is structured by the nature of the society in which it occurs. This would appear to mean that over-commercialization, drug-taking, cheating, bribe-taking by officials, violence, etc. at all levels of sport are simply reflections of the culture in which we live.

So much, therefore, for sport’s ongoing presumed relationship with moral-character development! Stoll and Beller (1998) had argued constructively and conversely that traditionally
an athlete with moral character has demonstrated such character traits as honesty, fair play, respect, and responsibility whether an official is present to enforce the rules or not. Sadly, however, in my opinion, there is now a great deal of evidence that sport may indeed be increasingly “backsliding” in its promotion of an ideal that stresses the fundamental moral virtues of honesty, fairness, and responsibility in the innumerable competitive experiences provided (Lumpkin, Stoll, and Beller, 1999).

This discussion about whether sport’s presumed educational and recreational roles have justification in fact could go on indefinitely. So many negative incidents have occurred that one hardly knows where to turn to avoid further negative examples. On the one hand we read the almost unbelievably high standards set in the Code of Conduct developed by the Coaches Council of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) (2001); yet, conversely we learn that today athletes’ concern for the presence of moral values in sport actually declined over the course of a university career (Priest, Krause, and Beach, 1999).

**What Type of Character Do We Really Desire for People?**

The basic question is: “What type of character do we seek for people?” I asked this question generally in *A Way Out of Ethical Confusion* (2004, p. iii) while referring to Commager’s 1966 specific list of 12 traits—i.e. “common denominators”—that he attributed to Americans at that time. In this list are many traits, some of which apply directly to the topic of sport’s relationship to character. These are self-confidence; materialism; complacency bordering occasionally on arrogance; cultivation of the competitive spirit; and indifference to, and exasperation with, laws, rules, and regulations” (p. 7). I believe that the situation had deteriorated further by the end of the 20th century. This belief, if true, has significance in a search for an answer to the topic at hand. Which type of “character” should we seek to have sport strive to develop as we move along in the twenty-first century?

In this process of critiquing competitive sport, my considered belief has been that society should strive to keep a balance between these two types of character development in balance to the greatest possible extent. In recent decades we have witnessed the rise of sport throughout America to the status of a fundamentalist religion. (For a significant number in Canada, hockey had already assumed such status!) For example, sport is at times being called upon to serve as a redeemer of wayward youth, but, as it is occurring elsewhere, it is also becoming a destroyer of certain fundamental values of individual and social life.

Concurrently, onrushing science and technology have also become the tempters of many coaches and athletes. This possibility has added another dimension to the personal and professional conduct of those people who are unduly anxious for recognition and financial gain. Beliefs such as these have created a vacuum of positive belief (i.e.- sport as an anti-value) for others like me who would view sustained through gate receipts—golf, tennis, gymnastics, soccer, and almost all of women’s sport). Traditionally, sport scholars, including sport philosophers, sport sociologists, and sport psychologists, have more commonly defined an athlete of character as one who is honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and compassionate (Arnold, 1999; Beller & Stoll, 1995; Gough, 1998; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). For example, Arnold (1999) stated: “In terms of moral goodness, or what I refer to as moral character, it involves a life that complies with such virtues as justice, honesty, and compassion” (p. 42).
Sport: A Powerful Social Institution
Without a Clearly Defined Theory

It does indeed seem, therefore, that there are two distinct definitions of character maintained by two camps. The first camp consists of certain coaches, administrators, and players who may typically define character with socio-instrumental values such as teamwork, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and perseverance. This could be designated as “socio-achievement character”. The second camp consists a percentage of those in the “first camp” above, along with sport scholars and people of earlier generations still alive, who typically define character with moral values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, compassion, and respect. This is commonly referred to by many of them as “moral-achievement character.” The existence of these two camps, each with their respective definitions of character, suggests that there is confusion and disagreement concerning the definition of character in sport. (Of course, there may be some “in the middle” who accept an overlapping, possibly conflicting set of values to describe the term “character.”)

I am simply stating here what I believe to be obvious. If we grant that sport now has become a significant power in our North American culture—and around the world for that matter as well—we should also recognize that any such social force affecting society can be dangerous if perverted (e.g. ultra-nationalism, excessive commercialism). With this in mind, I am arguing further that sport has somehow become such a powerful societal institution; yet nevertheless it is an institution without a clearly defined underlying theory. Somehow, most of society seems to be proceeding generally on a typically unstated stated assumption that “prevailing sport practice is a good thing for society to encourage, and more of “whatever prevails” is even better!” And yet, over and above the precisely defined addition above, the term “sport” also still exhibits radical ambiguity based on both everyday usage and additional dictionary definitions. This obviously adds even more to the present problem and accompanying confusion.

My earnest, long-considered conclusion is, however, that the more competitive sport becomes involved with money, the more the promulgation of moral-achievement character values will continue to be shunted aside. So I presume—the way things are going—we should simply accept the fact that the world wants sport to be so organized that the socio-achievement values should increasingly take precedence in the “world of tomorrow”. Sadly, as I think about the type of world I would like to see future generations enjoy, I find that I simply can’t accept this conclusion…
PART VII

How Sport and Physical Activity Education Could Contribute to Human Survival

Sport and related physical activity assumed greater or lesser importance starting with primitive societies and continued in later societies down to the present day. This human involvement has developed to become a social force that has steadily influenced society ever more significantly. Further, it is a vital concern for those who later employed it professionally. Such activity was used to help people of all ages and conditions in a variety of ways as they lived out their lives.

“Using and Abusing”

However, as with so many facets of life on Earth, such involvement can be used beneficially or misused to the subsequent improvement or detriment of humankind. It is my argument that we are using competitive sport well in some ways, but that we are also abusing it badly in others! In the case of competitive sport, we professionalized it heavily in the twentieth century, and thereby abused it by reaching a stage where we could well be doing considerable harm with it.

Conversely, in the case of related physical activity (i.e., regular exercise [including related health and safety education] in the developed world), I believe humans are too often “abusing related physical activity by first not understanding its potential for human betterment and subsequently not using it more intelligently”? In addition, ironically, in the “undeveloped world,” people typically get too much “enforced’ exercise” just to stay alive!

This situation is replicated for out-of-school young adults and then continues on typically throughout people’s lives until their death. This is not to say that some opportunities are not made available for young, out-of-school adults who wish to “get involved,” but such involvement is often expensive, inconvenient, difficult, and/or boring. Additionally, citizens of all ages, including youth, are urged regularly to pay money in some form or another to watch sport “stars” compete in a variety of so-called gate-receipt sports. This realm where “spectatoritis reigns” grew almost exponentially during the second half of the twentieth century with (1) burgeoning professional sport and (2) the Olympic extravaganza in its many and varied forms! There appears to be no evidence that it is letting up…

(Note: Interestingly, but sadly, a similar situation prevails with y2n the achievement of an ideal society, but it still seems to be a distant ideal.

Physical Activity & “Civilized Identity Society”

World society is obviously in a precarious state. It is therefore important to view present social conditions globally. I maintain that highly competitive sport and related, beneficial human physical activity have developed to a point where each has greater or lesser worldwide influence. However, there is too much of the former and too little of the latter! Both of these activities should be so organized and administered that they truly makes a contribution to a much larger percentage of people of all states and conditions in a “Civilized Identity Society.” This would be a society where “the concerns of humans will again focus on such concepts as

Can Humans Be Both “Judge and Jury”

What makes a question about the quality of life in earlier times doubly difficult, of course, is whether present-day humans can be both judge and jury in such a debate. On what basis can we decide, for example, whether any social progress has indeed been made such that would permit resolution of such a concept as ‘quality living’ including a modicum of “ideal sport competition” or “purposeful physical activity and related health education.”?

There has been progression, of course, but how can we assume that change is indeed progress? It may be acceptable as a human criterion of progress to say that we are coming closer to approximating the good and the solid accomplishments that we think humans should have achieved both including what might be termed “the finest type” of sport competition. The development of humans on Earth can be termed an “adventure.” We know that we are organisms (i.e., living creatures) who have reached a stage of development where we “know that something happened to create a beginning; is continuing to happen; and will evidently continue to happen.”

One basic question raised about this “adventure” is whether human nature was predetermined or whether it is evolving (i.e., whether cultural memes are stronger evolving genes). I believe that humans really aren’t sure about their “basic human nature” yet, because there have been at least seven rival theories as to its essence extending more or less from Plato to Freud in the Western World, not forgetting Lorenz’s theory that humans are innately aggressive.

There has been progression, of course, but how can we assume that change is indeed progress? It may be acceptable as a human criterion of progress to say that we are coming closer to approximating the good and the solid accomplishments that we think humans should have achieved both including what might be termed “the finest type” of sport competition and “an a quality program” of physical activity and health education (including intramural sport competition) in the schools.”

One realizes immediately, also, that any assessment of the quality of life in prerecorded history, including the possible role of competitive sporting in that experience, must be a dubious evaluation at best. However, I was intrigued by the work of Herbert Muller who has written so insightfully about the struggle for freedom in human history. I was impressed, also, by his belief that recorded history has displayed a “tragic sense” of life. Whereas the philosopher Hobbes (1588-1679) stated in his De homine that very early humans existed in an anarchically individualistic state of nature in which life was “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short,” Muller (1961) argued in rebuttal that it “might have been poor and short enough, but that it was never solitary or simply brutish” (p. 6).

Is Misuse of Sport a “Tragic Flaw”?

Accordingly, Muller’s approach to history is “in the spirit of the great tragic poets, a spirit of reverence and or irony, and is based on the assumption that the tragic sense of life is not only the profoundest but the most pertinent for an understanding of both past and present” (1952, p. vii). The rationalization for his “tragic” view is simply that the drama of human history has truly been characterized by high tragedy in the Aristotelian sense. As he states, “All
the mighty civilizations of the past have fallen, because of tragic flaws; as we are enthralled by any Golden Age we must always add that it did not last, it did not do” (p. vii).

**America’s “Golden Age”?**

This made me wonder whether the twentieth century of the modern era might turn out to be the “Golden Age” of America. This may be true because so many misgivings are developing about former blind optimism concerning history’s malleability and compatibility in keeping with American ideals. As Heilbroner (1960) explained in his ‘future as history’ concept, America’s still-prevalent belief in a personal “deity of history” is turning out to be short-lived in the 21st century as it is seemingly irrevocably going deeper into debt to the point of “no return”. Arguing that technological, political, and economic forces are “bringing about a closing of our historic future,” he emphasized the need to search for a greatly improved “common denominator of values” (p. 178).

However, all of this could be an oversimplification, because even the concept of ‘civilization’ is literally a relative newcomer on the world scene. Recall that Arnold Toynbee (1947) came to a quite simple conclusion about human development is his monumental *A Study of History*—that humankind must return to the one true God from whom it has gradually but steadily fallen away. An outdated concept, you might say, but there is a faint possibility that Toynbee may turn out to be right. However, we on this Earth dare not put all of our eggs in that one basket. We had best try to use our heads as intelligently and wisely as possible as we get on with striving to make the world as effective and efficient—and as replete with good, as opposed to evil, as possible.

**The Ideal Program of Physical Activity Education (including Sport)**

During my professional life of 72 years, I have continued to look starkly at the status of physical activity education and competitive sport in North America (the United States primarily). Viewed historically, I now believe that we have gotten our priorities “all screwed up” in both competitive sport and physical activity education and related health and safety education.

Then, on the assumption that society would want to solve any serious problem, I outlined steps that society ought to go through as it sought to do just that beginning with “Where are we now? I ended with “What exactly (specifically!) should we do?” I averred that all children and youth need understanding of, and experience with, the following selected competencies for their well being and enjoyment now and in the future:

1) Correct body mechanics  
2) Maintenance of physical fitness (cardio-respiratory and strength activities)  
3) “Aquatic competence” (how to swim and elementary lifesaving)  
4) An indoor & an outdoor leisure skill (e.g., badminton, tennis, golf)  
5) A self-defense activity (major emphasis on defense…)  
6) A team sport experience (e.g., basketball, soccer)  
7) An aesthetic movement activity (e.g., social dance)

(Note: The assumption is that special-needs people would receive adapted versions of the above experiences.)
Tracing Sport and Physical Activity Historically

Although I reached this conclusion based on both historical and philosophical analysis, to many people what I have to say here will probably brand me as a “mean old man and a spoilsport,” a grinch whose purpose is to to “upset the prevailing applecart…”! However, as the world moves along in the twenty-first century, I am absolutely convinced that we in the so-called “developed” world have our priorities all screwed up in both competitive sport and physical activity education. Frankly, I am so sick of “gold–medals this” and “own–the–podium that” that I feel completely frustrated by the money, time, and attention devoted to these activities for the “minute few”! Then, on top of over-blown extravaganza of the Olympics Games, we now also have the Paralympic Games and the Special Olympics. (Fortunately, the latter two are more like what the “big one” ought to be!) All in all, however, “enuf already…”

We Should Develop All People From the Ground Up!

Please don’t misunderstand me. I believe physical activity education and educational–recreational sport competition are wonderful activities for all people of all ages and conditions throughout their lives. There is evidence that such activity will enable people to live more fully and to also to live healthier lives longer! However, my fundamental point is that—for the good of humankind—we must build from the ground up with all people! As matters stand now, we do a fair to poor to “nil” job of physical activity education with related health & safety education for the very large majority of youth (and somewhat worse for the “female component of the mix”). Yet, when it comes to a relatively small fraction of youth who have been endowed with unusual physical talent—within both the public and the private educational sector, we do very well to excellent to superb with their experience in competitive sport.

Why Is Competitive Sport Unique in Education?

Think about it! Suppose we managed our affairs in this way with any other important subject or activity in the educational curriculum (e.g., English, science, math…)? The outcry would be so loud that all activity in our everyday world would be brought to a shrieking halt peremptorily. “How dare you deny this essential experience to my son (or daughter)? He (She) has a right to the same advantages that all others get! Throw the legislators, the educators, and/or any other ‘bum’ responsible for this dereliction of duty out of office on his/her rump this very day!”

I simply can’t understand why presumably intelligent people can’t see that somehow—“going West”—the cart has been put in front of the horse! Unless your son and daughter is gifted in his/her heritage of physical skill, he/she has become a nonentity in the education system! He or she is being deprived of what could be—if properly stressed and effectively taught—a truly important “physical activity education experience.” Such an experience would not only help him or her to learn other school subjects better, but it would also help to keep this young person healthy now and prepare him/her attitude-wise and literally “movement-wise” for the” long journey ahead” through life.

Listen to Bob Osterhoudt (one of the world’s top sport philosophers) on this point:

In any case, the hold of instrumental values such as these on sporting activity has been near to complete. The principal result of this hold is that sport gets its back turned to itself; it gets cut off from its own most basic character and purpose; it is unable to maintain any viable relation with the fabric of authentic human life. This is to say that, in such a circumstance,
sport is separated from its humanizing possibilities and is thereby denied the full human status it commands, the status that it requires in order to make a balanced, harmonious, and unified notion and experience of humanity itself possible. Insofar as it takes on the excesses, deficiencies, and divisions inherent in instrumental interpretations of it, sport cannot function within the intrinsic richness, within the organic illumination, of compelling human experience. Under the terms of such a condition, sport cannot but cultivate (or have cultivated for it) the germ of its own destruction and wither away as a worthy human activity.

Classify Them Early and Watch Them “Take Off!”

Just consider the prevailing situation starkly! The folks promoting the present “upside-down” approach to their version of physical activity education, including “varsity sport” competition, for youth will tell you that the present overemphasis for the few is the way to do it. Those “on the bottom,” they say blithely, will be inspired by seeing “all these medals arriving on our shores”. They will start working to “get there” too.

I say: “Baloney”! These “physical klutzes”–as society evidently sees it–will never have a chance if affairs continue as they occur—or don’t take place—today. This situation will continue to be the case until—the next thing you know—these “people in control” today will influence politicians to still further arrange things so that we’ll end up the way they are in China. “What’s this?” you say. Oh. it’s quite simple. The answer is to classify little boys and girls by testing to determine their inherent physical ability early; take them from their parents; and send them to specially designed schools for early training. Then watch them “get those gold medals on ‘the podium that their country owns’”! Wow! Glorioski! Eureka! Nirvana! We are “the greatest”!

Note: To me the logic of my above argument seems impeccable.
The illogical assessment of this stance appears to be: ‘Em that has, gits’. “That’s the way the world is. And don’t we like to watch our sporting events?”

Where Should We Want to Be with Physical Activity Education?

I need to make the case further that sound physical activity education including an intramural competitive sport experience is good for all boys and girls as they grow up to adult status. The need to monitor the growth and development pattern of the child is vital, because boys and girls today are simply not rugged enough! A majority of them in the “developed” world are either obese or overweight. They are mistakenly being allowed to lead “soft and easy” lives. Although parents should be careful not to employ undue pressures to influence the young person, nevertheless the child’s basic needs must be met if a desirable result is anticipated.

However, it should be understood that there is much more to life than sport. Some people seem to think that a normal, healthy youngster should be playing tiddlywinks most of the time, while at the other extreme people go so far as to encourage regional and national sport tournaments for elementary school boys and girls. Some people even have elementary school children running the marathon! Hence, it is simply not possible to discuss organized sport for children and youth intelligently unless we are fully aware of the entire pattern of child growth.
and development. For example, what is the physical growth and developmental pattern of a ten-year old? What are the characteristics of this age? Or to put it another way, what are his or her needs? My recommendation here is that parents should answer some fundamental questions for themselves.

**Two Questions Parents Should Ask**

What questions should any parent ask? The answers—and I have arranged the two basic questions in sequential order that can be useful—are as follows:

1. **What Are My Child’s Needs in Respect to Physical Activity Education (including Sport)?**
   First off, we should accept the assumption that a parent must strive to meet a child’s basic needs. With this in mind, we should learn what excellent, good, fair, and indifferent physical development is. For example, we are told that boys and girls are not rugged enough today. We are told, also, that children are typically too fat. So we need to know what children and youth are getting today with their experience in elementary and secondary physical activity and related health and safety education.

2. **How Do I Know That My Child/Youth Is Receiving a Fine Experience?**
   Then we need to know if this is enough. Does this concur for what I as a parent want for my child or young person? What “environment” is being provided for my child? Are there any undue pressures? Under what conditions does competitive sport offer an ideal setting for teaching and learning? For example, will my child be introduced to contact/collision sport before maturity? Also, is he/she specializing unduly at too early an age?

Further, despite that we want to guarantee the best type of physical activity education (including sport) for youth, we need to keep in mind that there is ever so much more to life than sport competition. So what we need finally is an educational environment that is best for children and youth in an ever-changing, complex, challenging world.

At this point let us be optimistic and prospective about this important matter. Accordingly, I would like to offer a “formula” that could well be tried out in communities of all sizes—and indeed is functioning in enlightened centers already. What I am recommending is steadily increasing cooperation between the recreation director and the physical activity educator/coach already. We know that boys and girls from eight to, say, 13 years of age are an interesting and challenging group with which to work. They are typically eager to try almost everything and anything. They respond readily to suggestion, and it makes us happy to see them at play (and occasionally “at work” too!). This is the age group where all children should really receive the finest of experiences!

As parents and enlightened citizens, we should encourage municipal recreation directors to work more closely with school principals, the physical activity education supervisors (if your community is fortunate enough to have such people), and the high school physical activity...
educators and coaches. You may say that your community is already doing this to a degree. My response is “To What Degree?” Nevertheless, I’ll wager that not many communities have come up with this idea. Why not encourage the high school physical activity education men and women teacher–coaches to suggest “amateur coaches” for your “recreational teams” from a leaders corps they might recommend? These would be young coaches of both sexes who would receive planned recognition and small honoraria for devoted, capable assistance.

Here, I feel, is our greatest potential for coaching leadership. I am certain that in most communities we are not making the best use of such an excellent source for young, interested leadership. Incidentally, along the way we could be running clinics for these young people to develop their leadership potential even further. Also, most of these young people are going to stay right in your community. Hence it would be useful to them and the community to encourage this idea of community service through an internship experience. Some of them might even go on to follow this type of endeavor as a profession.

“Let’s Give the ‘Right Kind’ of Sport & Related Physical Activity a Chance”!

I believe physical activity education and educational–recreational sport competition are wonderful activities for all people of all ages and conditions throughout their lives. There is evidence that such activity will enable people (1) to live their lives more fully and (2) to live healthier ones longer! However, my fundamental point is that—for the present and future good of humankind—we must build from the ground up with all people!

As matters stand now, we do a fair to poor to “nil” job of physical activity education with the very large majority of youth (and somewhat worse for the “girl and young-woman component of the mix”). Yet, when it comes to a minute fraction of youth—“accelerated and special”—within both education and the private sector, we actually do quite well to excellent to superb with competitive sport.

After a couple of “fireside chats” with Harry Johnson, the late Parsonian sociologist, we agreed: “Sport involvement should be connected with the all-important values of human life that, in slightly different forms, are vital for all ‘valuable’ human activities.”

We concluded further that among these values are the following:

1. Health itself (of course),
2. The value of trying to make a contribution regardless of actual success—the value of effort itself,
3. The value of actual achievement, including excellence,
4. The value of respect for opponents,
5. The value of cooperation (i.e., one’s ability to subordinate the self to the attainment of collective goals),
6. The value of fair play (i.e., respect for the rules of competition, which are universalistic ideally),
7. The value of orderly procedure for the settling of disputes in the contest, and
8. The value of displaying grace in intensively competitive situations—including magnanimity in victory and the ability to accept defeat gracefully—
and then to try to gain victory the next time. Human physical activity, broadly interpreted and experienced under wise educational or recreational conditions, can indeed provide value and be a worthwhile social institution contributing vitally to the well being, ongoing health, and longevity of humankind?

LET’S PROMOTE SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR ALL PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THEIR ENTIRE LIVES!
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As author, I (Earle Zeigler) thought “the world” would be a better place for all people by the turn of the 21st century. However, it doesn’t seem to be heading in that direction; so, I am forced to conclude: (1) that in many ways we are confused about what our values are at the present, (2) that we need to reconsider them and then re-state exactly what we believe they are in light of the changing times and, finally, (3) that we will then need to assess more carefully-on a regular basis!-whether we are living up to those values we finally choose and then so often in the past have glibly espoused with insufficient commitment to bring them to pass.

My main concern in this book, however, is (1) the way that America is using competitive sport in society for the wrong purposes and (2) the fact that America doesn’t recognize that physical activity education, including related health education and intramural athletics for the large majority of children and youth in education, has not been recognized for the outstanding contribution it could make to the lives of children and young people in their formative years especially.

Looking at sport specifically, we are permitting the type of sport competition in which fair play, honesty, and sportsmanship actually decline in the course of a university experience. We continue to promote the idea that winning is the only thing that matters! Further, we promote the idea that competitive sport is good for young people, but then neglect to arrange for intramural athletics in the schools for the large majority of children and youth. At the same time we arrange for athletic scholarships whether the young person has financial need or not! Finally, I regret to say that we have just scratched the surface with what I have reported above. And I haven’t even mentioned the “doping problem”!