A Female's View of Sports

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A FEMALE'S VIEW OF SPORTS

Although my entrance into the world as the first child of my parents was, I know, a joyous one, there was one drawback: I was a female. However, this drawback did not disconcert my father, an athlete and coach himself, who longed to train a son in the intricacies of the baseball swing and the basketball dribble. He taught me anyway.

Therefore, I did not bother myself with foolishness such as dolls, dresses, make-up, or boyfriends. I was interested in playing ball, or any game that involved skill and competition. I was, and will admit it freely, a tomboy.

However, in our culture a female must realize that women athletes are not as accepted as those of the male species. Women are expected not to demand the same advantages as men do and not to have the same competitive nature as a man. Moreover, women who participate in sports or who enjoy watching sports are often defensive about these aspects of their lives. Therefore, the thesis which follows is my defense of sport--its problems, benefits, values; and a look at the society of which it is a part. I am not an athlete who is going to write a paper on sports, but a person interested in athletics who will do an intellectual defense and analysis of sports. My defense begins.

My early heroes were not Florence Nightingale, Peggy
Fleming, or Saint Bernadette, like those of my classmates. On the contrary, I emulated Pete Rose and Bart Starr. (I'm glad that girls today have women athletes like Chris Evert Lloyd, Nancy Lopez, and Dorothy Hamill to look up to.) I saw Pete for the first time when I went to Crosley Field, in the fourth grade, to watch the Reds of Cincinnati play the Pirates of Pittsburgh. When I saw the player with his hair in a crewcut, hustling all over the field, I knew he was for me. From that time on, my Reds' cap was almost inseparable from my head. I played the game, all games at that, with aggressiveness and tenacity, and a temper. Whenever my team lost, I threw the bats, ball, and my fists. I guess that the coolness of Bart Starr never rubbed off on me. I spent many Sunday afternoons watching him guide my favorite football team, the Packers of Green Bay, to victory over their poor foes. For backyard football games my green and gold jersey, number fifteen, of course, was a fixture. However, football never became my true love, because I discovered something about myself which is still true today: when it comes to true violence, that is, the crunching of body against body, I am a chicken at heart.

On the other hand, Pete Rose and Bart Starr were never afraid; they showed the courage necessary to be a great athlete. Rose never hesitated to knock down a catcher on his way to home plate, and Starr stood firm in the rush of the defense. In my opinion, those men are heroes. They seemed infallible, always making the right play at the right time, steady, consistent, always giving their best effort against all the bad odds. They played like they loved it, and they did, and I always liked to think that they would
play for free. Why, I would play for nothing! It would be an honor to play.

All the past legends and heroes had the same image for me: unselfish, consistently outstanding, and basically good guys. But in the contemporary world of sports, where are the heroes? To whom can you point and say, there is a person whose picture I want to hang on my wall? Is there a Joe DiMaggio, a Rocky Marciano, or a man or woman who can do what Jackie Robinson did for the black race? Can we turn to any athlete and say, "There's the perfect athlete"?

I would like to have a hero, to hang a poster of an athlete whom I truly admire on my wall. However, in my opinion, there is no such person today. Take, for example, the case of my ex-hero, Pete Rose. I know that the Reds should have paid Rose millions of dollars for the efforts that he gave that team, and that Pete earned all that he could get. But, Pete, why did you have to sell your wares like a coast-to-coast Avon lady? I kept expecting Pete to call a press conference and proclaim, "Money isn't everything. I'll stay here in Cincinnati where the people love me." However, what happened to Pete and all athletes is not entirely the fault of the athletes. Whose fault, therefore, is it? Is it the fans' fault, whose unquenchable desire for winning has caused even amateur athletic organizations such as some colleges to do anything, legal or illegal, to win? Is it the owners' fault, those men who are willing to pay an ordinary athlete an exorbitant amount of money to play for their clubs? Should we blame inflation, television, corporations, or schools? In a way, many of us must share some of
the blame. We are all a part of the mechanism that makes sports what they are today: our society.

Our society determines to a great extent the values and attitudes of everyone in it and of all its institutions. Government, education, entertainment, the mass media, the business world, and also sports (all parts of society) are influenced by the values and attitudes of that society.

Let me discuss, then, some of the values which, in my opinion, degrade and harm our society. First is narcissism. Narcissism is love of self, ignoring the needs and desires of others in order to care only for yourself. Christopher Lasch, in his book *The Culture of Narcissism*, wrote, "To live for the moment is the prevailing passion—to live for yourself, not for your predecessors or posterity." People who hold these narcissistic values refuse to accept responsibility for their actions, no matter how harmful they are to others. Take as an example abortion. One million times a year a woman who becomes pregnant refuses the responsibility of giving nine months of her life for a child's life. She instead aborts that life. She thinks only of herself, not of the baby or the parents who might adopt it. Certainly the abortion rate of our society reflects harshly upon us all.

Another degrading set of values that I see in our society is that of the love for money, or greed. It seems that many people would do anything for a buck. Money is the key to existence in today's society. Money, some think, can buy happiness. I think that it is a sad world when we do anything for money or judge people by the amount of money that they possess. Greed is
a prevalent attitude in our society, and a very influential one.

The final societal influence that I would like to present is that of trivialization. Many of our cultural institutions, including sports, are essentially non-utilitarian activities. They do not balance the budget, bring peace to the world, or feed hungry people. But it is the illusion of importance, or what Christopher Lasch describes as "... the investment of seemingly trivial activity with serious intent," that gives value to sports, the theatre, or a concert. Therefore, when we lose the illusion of importance, we are left with just another television show, or a trivial, insignificant event.

How are these values reflected in sport? You see it all the time. All the exposes, indictments of sport, and frustrations of the fans show us that people are getting tired of all the money problems in sports, of the selfish athletes and owners, and of sports becoming more spectacle and entertainment than sport.

There is no doubt in my mind that the same narcissism which is evident in our society is also infiltrating our sports. Athletes are becoming as self-oriented as any "average" person. An athlete these days seems to want to build up the best statistics and reputation for himself in order to sell himself to the highest bidder, be it a ball club or a television producer. Perhaps this narcissism is a great cause of the lack of team loyalty, on the part of players and fans, which has become evident in recent years.

How can a team expect loyal fans when the players will leave at any moment for more money or for a better commercial market? The reason that I can no longer be a Pete Rose or a Cincinnati Reds' fan is because I was hurt when Rose left Cincinnati over money.
As I said earlier, it was both parties' fault; but why couldn't they have thought of all the fans, like me, who wanted to see Pete in a Red's uniform for another five years?

However, there is another view on the loss of team loyalty. In many cases fan and player loyalty is tied to the image of the area that the team represents. For example, the Pittsburgh Steelers represent a tough, hard-working region, a people who gets up after it has been knocked down. Today, regions that used to represent qualities like Pittsburgh does have become homogeneous with all other regions. Rooting for the Green Bay Packers no longer means rooting for a special Lombardian image; it means rooting for a bad football team. In addition, representing a unique region such as Green Bay, Cincinnati, or Pittsburgh probably means nothing to the athletes who come from a region far removed from these or those who do not know geography and United States history. No matter what the cause is, the loss of team loyalty by players and fans alike is to be mourned by all who are true sports fans.

Another set of values that I see moving rapidly into the world of sports is that of greed, or love of money. Contract breakings, free agent bidding, franchises moving, ticket prices rising, salaries being widely discussed, and all the rest indicate that sports are becoming just a business. I wish that more sports leaders would realize that people will go to their games and watch them on television because they are an escape or diversion from the "real world" of business and greed. Sports are being cheapened and ruined by all those money problems. If I want to read about
money and contracts, I'll buy a *Wall Street Journal*. At least once the athletes take the field, they are concerned only with the game itself, thinking about winning that particular event. However, I am concerned when an athlete like St. Louis Cardinal shortstop Garry Templeton says that he will not play his best unless he is paid more. I hope that there are no more cases like this one: athletes holding back their services in order to increase their salary or publicity level.

Finally, I am concerned that sports in our society are being trivialized. One medium that especially does this is television. The networks add so much extra "hype" that the game becomes just a piece of the whole entertainment package. The announcers try to entertain us with non-stop chatter or by explaining every little detail as if we were third-graders. The team management itself tries to amuse the spectators with flashy scoreboards, Super-Chicken mascots, ballgirls dressed in short shorts who couldn't catch a ball if their life depended on it, and gaudy uniforms. Of course, we cannot ignore the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, the Honey Bears, the Pace-Mates, and all the other groups who bring the element of sex into the arena. I'm worried that it is not sport anymore: it is a spectacle. The game itself is enough to hold my attention; I wonder how many other people can do without the artificial extras?

But another point must be addressed: perhaps we, the spectators, are being selfish. Should we be happy that the athletes are getting more money for their talents and better opportunities to get this money? Should we appreciate the fact that college
athletes are getting many opportunities and advantages above and beyond those of "regular" students? Perhaps we are the selfish ones. But I claim that we are not.

If sports were merely entertainment, we would be unjust in despising athletes because they further their own interests by salary disputes, free agency, endorsements, and by their media celebrity status. For example, we are not outraged when a television celebrity like Johnny Carson or film actors such as Marlon Brando earn millions of dollars for a minimum of actual screen time. We are not angry when it costs $40 million to produce a movie. However, as Christopher Lasch has written, the resentment of these qualities in sports "... indicates the persistence of a need to believe that sport represents something more than entertainment."³

Indeed, the origin of sport was not in entertainment but in religion. The ancient Olympic Games in Greece probably started in 1300 B.C. These ancient Greeks believed that the vigor expended in sports was transferred to growth and fertility. Even today we see nations striving to show their vitality through success in international sport. By 700 B.C. the Olympic Games, held once every four years, were five days of sacrifices, religious ceremonies, races, wrestling, and arts in honor of the god Zeus. The Olympic Games were ended at the end of the fourth century A.D. during the Christian suppression of paganism. As McIntosh concludes, "The beginning and the end of the Olympic Games were thus determined by current religious thought and practice."⁴

Today, sports have many elements of religion. Michael Novak, in his definitive work The Joy of Sports, lists many of these
qualities. These include: sports' organization and structure; the customs that develop; the difference between right and wrong; the professional "watchdogs" who supervise; the high levels of awareness that are achieved by all involved; finally, Fate's role in the outcome of events.\(^5\)

There are many more similarities which could be noted here. But the arena is our cathedral, the athletes our priests, and we are the fans (a word which has as its origin the Latin word *fanum*, meaning temple). As Michael Novak has written, "... sports flow outward into action from a deep natural impulse that is radically religious: an impulse of freedom, respect for ritual limits, a zest for symbolic meaning, and a longing for perfection... Sports are, as it were, natural religions."\(^6\)

A person need go no further than his local gymnasium or stadium for proof that sports are not merely entertainment. People consistently attend athletic contests, and no matter what the occasion, most of them are not too shy to let their feelings about the contest go unspoken. Fans do not sit passively as in a theatre, but become as much a part of the game as the players, coaches, or officials are. If you doubt this assertion, recall that several years ago the Notre Dame crowd won the most valuable player award during a nationally broadcasted basketball game.

Therefore, when sports become trivialized, money-permeated, and self-centered, the sacred structures surrounding them break down, and sports become entertainment, or spectacle. A spectacle is a circus, a magic act, a parade, or a half-time show. Sports fans are not selfish when they demand something more than spectacle.
They are not selfish when they feel cheated by highly-paid athletes with little loyalty to the team. They are just lamenting the loss of an institution to which they have long had a devotion: the religion of sports.

There are other aspects of sports which I also think are wrong; however, I do not want to discuss them further because I do not want to sound overly dismal and pessimistic. I like sports because of the games themselves--what goes on during the game, not in the contract hassles, the television broadcasts, or the bank. I have experienced sports through participation and observation, and I know that I have gained from both.

I think that there are many positive reasons for a person to become involved in sports or any activity outside of school and work. First, involvement makes you more than a one-sided person. It gives you experiences, perceptions, and attitudes different from those you acquire just going to school, as in my case. Next, sports, or other activities, are an outlet for energy and frustration that might be spent otherwise on an ulcer or nervous breakdown.

An additional benefit from participation in sports is friendship. I have made many friends as a result of participation in sports, and some of them--close friends. There is something unique about joining with a group of girls with one goal in mind, for example, a state championship; practicing very hard, performing your best, and finally sharing in the outcome, good or bad. The experience is very different from just being in class with someone. It is somehow more lasting and special. Michael Novak calls this
experience the "bond of brothers"—or in my case, the bond of sisters. He describes this bond as a struggle against death, as symbolized by defeat. It is living in a community, subordinating yourself and your self-centered talents for the many-centered-ness of the team. Novak concluded, "The point of team sports is to afford access to a level of being not available to the solitary individual, a form of life ablaze with communal possibility."8

In addition, there are the benefits that fall under the category of what Novak calls self-discovery: gaining self-confidence, strengthening your body, and becoming a better person under pressure. Each sport also teaches you humility and reconciliation.9 I am sure that for each time I have triumphed over someone, I have been humbled by another. In sports, one learns how to deal with defeat and learns the lesson of humility. Another lesson, that of reconciliation, was also learned by me through sports. During any contest, as player or spectator, you hate your rivals. However, after the contest is through, you appreciate the talent and skill of your rivals and reconcile with them. Finally, through sports you discover your limits.10 There are many people who lack the talent of others, but through a knowledge of what their bodies are capable of doing they are able to surpass the more talented ones. And by competition, by trying to surpass others or the goals we have set for ourselves, we can learn our limits. We discover ourselves.

A discovery that I made through sports was learning how to control my temper. As I said earlier, I used to have a hot temper. However, when I first played on teams I noticed that tempers were
neither stylish nor approved of. I gradually curbed mine, much to my satisfaction. In conclusion, I think that anyone who has never had the opportunity to be on a sports team, whether he liked it or not, has been deprived of a meaningful experience.

Concerning the case of being a spectator of sports, I do not consider the hundreds of hours that I have spent watching sports, either in person or on television, to have been wasted. (I am not speaking of "Trashsports", of course, those contrived affairs played merely for money.) Maybe another person would say that watching sports is wasteful, but not I. When I watch a game, practically any game, I feel the struggle and the desire to succeed. I want to take the bat and whack the ball, or go in and play defense on a player so tightly that he can't move. I feel anger at the errors, joy at the successes, and relief when it is finally all over and one team has settled the issue.

Of course, all fans can feel the suspense and drama of an event. But as Novak has pointed out, a true fan appreciates the precision, beauty, and struggle involved in the contest. What makes a contest special are those moments when a player executes a play perfectly. The play lasts but a moment, but the memory is etched in your mind. For example, Pete Rose's swinging the bat and getting a single, Gale Sayers' running with the football, or a local basketball star's jump shot. I can still remember Sam Drummer jumping so high in the air and lofting a soft, arching shot that hit nothing but net.

Spectatorship does not have to be a passive experience.
Christopher Lasch writes that, provided the performance has quality enough to stir up an emotional response, through spectatorship we find standards by which to judge ourselves. We enter the world of the athlete imaginatively, experiencing the pain of defeat or the joy of triumph. By watching Larry Bird play basketball, a lesser player can set a standard for himself: to be able to shoot as well, to develop his passing ability to Bird's level, or to have such calmness and intensity on the court. In addition, we can say: I could have caught that ball; or perhaps, we can dream: I would like to try to play centerfield for the Reds someday. Roger Kahn in the *Boys of Summer*, a book examining baseball's old Brooklyn Dodgers, voices this feeling exactly: "In the intimacy of Ebbets Field it was a short trip from the grandstand to the fantasy that you were in the game." Some of us still make that trip.

An example of one of the most enjoyable spectator experiences is, in my opinion, baseball's Chicago White Sox. The ballpark, which is not huge and plastic like so many of the newer stadia, seems so natural and fitting for baseball. There's natural grass, yes, the real live stuff growing there! The fans really get involved in the game. They chant, cheer, boo, and even sing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" in the middle of the seventh inning, led by none other than broadcaster Harry Caray himself. My favorite part is when, after the Sox have put their opponents away in defeat, all the fans sing these words, over and over: "Na, na, na, na; na, na, na, na; hey, hey, hey, good-bye!" One never hears anything like that at Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium.
I know that the majority of the fans come from Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, and other Ohio cities, not Cincinnati itself. The people are tourists, not fans in the true sense of the word. Now in Chicago, they are fans—they have to be to watch their teams lose so often. Now, if the Sox could only win more games . . .

I have been examining the problems and benefits of sports in our society with a heavy emphasis on professional sports. However, the same problems and benefits can be applied at any level. I have placed a heavy emphasis on professional sports because they are the ones which are first showing the influences and sicknesses which ail our society. These influences are also entering amateur sports.

For example, it is a well-accepted fact that college and university sports programs are the "farm systems" for professional teams. Athletes attend many schools only for athletic training and then never graduate. Recent scandals at Arizona State University and the University of New Mexico demonstrate to what lengths a school will go in order to insure a winning program, at the expense of the athletes. At New Mexico, for instance, an associate athletic director estimates that around 25% of the basketball players graduate. What happens to the 75% who do not graduate and who do not get a position in professional basketball? As Peter Axthelm has written, "... one of the prime justifications for college athletics involves a different level of responsibility. When school officials recruit prospects of marginal educational and social development, they owe the kids more guidance than directions to the hoop. A few idealists among us even think that they owe them
I also am disturbed that most athletes never earn their degrees—they use the school for its athletic fund and program, and the school in turn uses the athletes to sell tickets, build larger stadia, and win championships which insure more "blue-chip" athletes. The athletic program can do great things for schools. It can bring together all parts of the university, professors, students, staff, and also the citizens of the community. It can give them pride and something to brag about. But a university should be more than a strong football team: it should prepare every student for a productive life. In addition, amateur athletics in general should not be run with any purpose in mind but to test the ability of the athlete; not for national or school glory but for personal achievement. As Christopher Lasch has written, "Games quickly lose their charm when forced into the service of education, character development, or social improvement." I have such high hopes for women's athletics, particularly on the college level: women have a chance to avoid the errors that men have made. They have a chance to build programs for true student-athletes and for participation. However, I am sad to see that women are recruiting, giving scholarships, and emphasizing winning just like their male counterparts. It is too bad that history must repeat itself.

I'd like to pause here to recap what I have discussed so far. I have related some of my athletic experiences and the benefits I have received from sports; I have written about the values and wrongs in our society that have degraded our sports; finally,
I have tried to defend being a female who is interested in sports. However, I think that it is time for me to offer some remedies for our sports culture. I would like to begin by going back in time—by approximately fifty years.

In the 1920's there were no radios, televisions, or media other than the newspapers which publicized sports. Sports were much more simple in those days. Men's sports were practically free from scandal, scholarships, and professionalism. (One notable exception was the Black Sox Scandal in baseball in 1920.) Teams certainly wanted to win, but they would not cheat or steal from the opponent to do so. Even women were involved in the high school and college sports scenes. One such woman was Ruth Jones, who happened to grow up and become my grandmother. She offered me some interesting insights into the world of sports as she knew it, in the 1920's.

My grandmother was active in track, dancing, and basketball in high school; and she was a physical education major at Indiana State Normal College-Eastern Division, which is now Ball State University. During these years she experienced a very wide range of athletic events, in class and in competition. Why did she choose to study physical education and to participate in sports? First, she loved to be active. Exercise was a great part of her growing up on her parents' farm. She also enjoyed competing, acquiring new skills, and achieving new levels through sports. Overall, she believed very strongly in the motto that her high school physical education teacher wrote in her yearbook: a sound mind and a sound body. She still believes very strongly that sports should be
played for fun and the joy that they can bring.

She, along with many of her friends, gained many benefits from sports. They gained not only fitness of body, but also an understanding of other people and how to get along with them. They also treasure the memories of competition and achievement.

Most of all, Grandmother remembers the joy of sports and the friendships that she gained. She believes that we are losing this joy today, and that we are also not providing children with activities or exercises that they can continue throughout their lives. Sound bodies are still important today.

What, then, are ideal sports? I think that many of the qualities of these ideal sports are found in the concepts of the 1920's, such as competition, skills, achievement, fun, fitness, and personal growth.

First, I believe that sports should be played for the sake of playing. Winning should be a goal, of course. I find it impossible to participate in any competition without the idea of being the best. I also think that coaches should instill in their athletes the desire to win. However, winning should not be the only goal. In other words, if one does not win, he should not become angry or think that the experience has been wasted. Ideally, sports should be people participating as a team or as individuals, competing against others or themselves, and doing the best they can. If you win, fine; if not, at least you tried your best.

Next, what is valued in my vision of perfect sport differs from what is valued today. Personal glory, money, or other material objects are not important. Valued are doing your best, gaining new
skills, achieving new levels of personal and physical growth, building friendships, and, above all, having fun. I hope that I can look back fifty years, as my Grandmother can do, and say, "I really had fun playing ball. I wish I could still do that!"

In addition, I believe that ideally we should give everyone a chance to participate when we have a game. Especially in our society, it seems that only the "stars" get to play. Everyone, not just the "stars", should have the opportunity to experience some sports situation. This is especially relevant for younger children. Too many young spirits have been crushed by egotistical parents and win-oriented coaches. Let's teach them how to play and let them have fun: that is what sports should be all about.

Finally, sports should make people fit and give everyone the knowledge to stay physically fit. Perhaps we are too team-oriented now: we emphasize sports that require too much equipment and too many people. Particularly helpful, then, would be the development of lifelong activities: those sports such as tennis, racquetball, swimming, jogging, and bicycling which offer some degree of fitness and which one can play throughout his lifetime and without much inconvenience.

This ideal in sports would require a special society. As I have discussed above, contemporary society is winning-oriented, "now"-oriented, and "me"-oriented. These narcissistic attitudes have infiltrated the sports world, creating a situation in which the very qualities from which we try to escape through sports are now present in sports.

Therefore, the type of society for which we are looking is
one free from these narcissistic qualities. First, all men (and women) think for themselves. Men are not influenced by the consumer media, corporations, the government, or television to be someone they cannot or need not be. Men ask questions: they criticize, question, and are unsatisfied with the generations and happenings before them.

In addition, our special society is made up of integrated people. An integrated person sees the relationships in the society and in the world; and he struggles with intellectual problems. An integrated person is a caring and sensitive person because he sees how his actions affect other people. He understands that to be a successful person he must work with the people in his society and not with his own selfish interests.

Finally, another quality of a good society is that the people have the power to change it. In our society today change is a long, tedious, and next-to-impossible task because of bureaucracy and the power structure of the elite. Certainly, there are superficial changes such as fads or innovations. However, only a deeply-rooted effort can bring about the change needed to make today's society a good society. In addition to possessing the power to make change, the people exercise this power in a good society. It is not enough to care: only concrete results are acceptable.

Obviously, if our society were to attain this ideal, many of our problems, including our sports problems, would be solved. Therefore, one way to correct our sports problems is by changing our society. Of course, one can see that it would take generations
of work to change our society toward this ideal. Perhaps there are some remedies we can offer within the sports system itself.

First, we must educate our parents, school officials, league administrators, and coaches that sports have many benefits that must be made available to all interested children. Winning should be one goal, but not the ultimate goal. We should especially teach our young children who are just starting in sports that doing your best, learning new skills, having fun, and making friends are just as important as winning. In addition, leagues for children at least up through middle school level should be organized with the purpose of letting everyone play. Too often the early-developing children so dominate all other participants that by the time the other children grow and become skilled players, they are already out of the program.

Activities should also be developed to interest all youngsters, not just those who like team sports. Tennis, gymnastics, roller skating, golf, track and field, swimming, and dance are examples of this type of activity.

How can people be educated and their attitudes changed? Articles in magazines and newspapers, speakers on television, and other uses of the media could accomplish much. I think that athletic organizations who owe a great debt to the school and recreation programs for furnishing them with athletes should repay part of this debt by helping fund and furnish this education. Perhaps if professional leagues and college organizations were to do this, they would find in years to come the type of athletes that their programs have been lacking: athletes who are total
people, who do not center their lives on a sport; and athletes who have the proper attitude toward sport, who will not destroy what we have.

Another important attitude that must be changed is that emphasis upon team sports. People do "grow out" of team sports. For example, what does a football player do after he is no longer in an organized football program? It is often difficult for an athlete who wants to continue to engage in team sports to find enough participants and suitable facilities to do so. Therefore, amateur athletic organizations, our government, corporations, colleges and universities, and city recreation programs must develop the facilities and programs necessary to get people out of their seats and into some exercise program, particularly a lifelong activity discussed before. Watching sports on television is fine, unless you do nothing else.

Finally, the problems of college and professional sports have been thoroughly discussed by many critics. These same men have also offered their own solutions to these problems. I think that the governing bodies of men's and women's intercollegiate sports, the NCAA and AIAW, respectively, are doing a commendable job in their efforts to keep sports honest. However, I think that they should go as far as barring from intercollegiate sports coaches who deliberately violate the rules. These men and women are doing irreparable harm to athletes and athletic programs by their acts and should be punished accordingly.

In my opinion, professional sports will continue to experience the problems that they have been suffering over the last decade.
Something will have to give: perhaps the fans, who will be unable to afford these sports; the owners, who will also run out of capital; or maybe the players will price themselves out of a job. However, professional sports do have a place in our society and our sports world, and I hope that they can avoid ruin and continue to function.

Writing this paper has given me an opportunity to take an imaginative trip through the world of sports. I have examined sports in a personal way, by reflecting on my experiences and achievements; and in an intellectual way, by examining values, our society, sports as a religion, the problems and benefits of sports, and my ideal of sports and society.

Now that my journey has been completed, I can state conclusively that a person is not necessarily "just" an athlete or a mindless spectator of sports. Most people who indulge in sports in a certain capacity do so because of a need or desire: the need to compete, to dream, to become physically fit, to discover himself or herself, to develop bonds of friendship, and to witness beauty and perfection. Sports are not perfect, but neither are many parts of our society. Sports are an integral and essential part of our society. My defense rests.
FOOTNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 195.

3 Ibid., p. 211.


6 Ibid., p. 19.

7 Ibid., p. 134.

8 Ibid., pp. 134-141.

9 Ibid., pp. 158-9.

10 Ibid., p. 162.

11 Ibid., p. 5.

12 Lasch, p. 193.


15 Pete Axthelm, Newsweek, 24 December 1979, p. 77.

16 Lasch, p. 182.
I have compiled here a list of books concerning sports which I have read. Some have had a great influence on my attitudes toward sports; others have been diversions. Many of these I own; others are in public libraries.


