

Amateur sport worse for wear

Symposium explores post-Olympic maladies

By DAVE FULLER

Canadian amateur sport is the worse for wear after the Olympics according to panelists who spoke at last Tuesday's post Olympic inquiry held at York.

"We failed badly to take advantage of the games in Canada", said Lou Lefaive, president of the National Sport and Recreation centre in Ottawa.

Speaking on the role of the government in amateur sport, Lefaive pointed out that the administration of last summer's games was in many cases, left to "little tin gods" and suffered as a result.

PROBLEMS

The administrative problems encountered were unfortunate, but worse still the officials of the organizing bodies in Canada did not learn from their mistakes and as a result Canada will face similar problems with the Commonwealth games in 1978.

While most people in Canada connected with amateur sport are critical of the lack of adequate funding for our athletes, few people realize that the situation will not improve unless there develops "a partnership between government and the private sector".

Funding must come from a fifty-fifty partnership with the private sector," said Chris Lang, vice-president of the Canadian Olympic Association, "they have to get together in a programme like that the United Way."

According to Doug Fisher, chairman of Hockey Canada, the administrative "structure of sport mimicked the government structure, they have forgotten the grass root level".

BUREAUCRACIES

As a result of highly centralized government bureaucracies, most attempts to improve the funding

and administration of amateur sport have failed.

"The politicians are a cinch to convince," said Fisher "it's the bureaucrats who are difficult to convince."

On the more positive side, the growing awareness of sport as an aspect of our culture has been furthered by the media coverage during the games. According to Lou Lefaive, "this growing awareness is something that politicians will react to".

NOT FITNESS

But the reasons for supporting amateur sport are vague, said Lefaive, "the public has always found some other reason for supporting sport." He called for the public to think in terms of sports for its own sake and not for the sake of fitness.

Chris Lang, pointed out the need for all concerned to understand sport better. According to Lang "we failed to point out to the media and the public just what sport is about."

Within the sports federations themselves, there is a conceptual problem which is preventing any progress in the development of sport in Canada.

SELF INTEREST

"The believers can't see sport as whole, said Doug Fisher, "put them together with all their self interests and it's war."

They have got to present their long range goals to the bureaucrats", he said, "short range programmes do not fit with the government's programmes."

In many ways the Olympics were seen as a destructive influence on Canadian sport. Citing the examples of soccer and boxing Lou Lefaive said that some sports have really been hurt, simply because Canada was forced to field a team as the host country.



Lou Lefaive, president of the National Sports and Recreation Centre, speaks to an appreciative crowd at the post-Olympic inquiry which was held at York last Tuesday.

"There are 14-15 sports bodies hanging on by a thread because of the Olympics, some have almost gone bankrupt."

PROFESSIONAL SYNDROME

"The opinion is that the athletes should pay for it themselves, that it should break even."

Doug Fisher suggested this was due to our society's "professional syndrome".

To further illustrate the administrative problems that plague our athletes both Fisher and Lou Lefaive indulged in an excited debate over whose responsibility the promotion of sport was.

Lefaive pointed out that there were many levels of government, none of whom were sure that sport should be within their jurisdiction.

Former director of Physical Education at York, Dr. Bryce Taylor, was present to speak on the role of Physical Education and the University.

Dr. Taylor stressed that research into sports was failing to have any direct benefit for athletes in the field. The need for more specific research and development of new techniques, he said,

TREMENDOUS EXPOSURE

Still other sports have gained credibility because of the tremendous exposure they received and, as a result, have shown marked improvement in their coaching and administrative programmes.

Tom Riley, Etobicoke commissioner of Parks and Recreation was the lonely voice from the municipal level of amateur sport administration.

Criticizing the "obscene" expenditures of the Olympic organizers for the Montreal games, he told a sympathetic audience that the new Olympic calibre pool in his own borough was not allowed an operating budget of \$250,000 while the \$215,000 needed to run the borough's own facility was passed each year without question.

was there, but more importantly the results of these projects had to be put into "a more simplified and understandable form for the practicing coach, athlete and official."

The inquiry was sponsored by the York Department of Physical Education and was organized by members of a fourth year course in physical education administration.

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