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defense. Fumbles flew off in all direction. Their games of ten resembled comedy more than football. But NBC knew a shrewd investment when they saw one.

They paid the AFL owners \$38 million for a five year contract, (compared with the just under \$9 million the American Broadcasting Company had paid for the AFL's previous five-year contract), and this was the money the new league used to battle the old for the pick of the most promising rookies.

"We couldn't have competed," said AFL Commissioner Joe Foss, "without television." And sure enough, with NBC putting up a good part of the bankroll, the new league became almost as strong as the old, and NBC had a valuable product on its hands.

"If you don't watch these TV people," says former Boston Celtics basketball coach Bill Russell, "they will devour you. First they ask you to call time-outs so they can get in their commercials. Then they will tell you when to call them. Then they want to get into the locker room at half time. Then more and more. If you don't put on the brakes, they'll tell you when to play."

Russell made these statements five years ago. Now television does tell sports teams when to play - for example, we have ABC's \$7.5 million schedule of Monday night pro football.

There has been a lot of hullabaloo about TV breaking up games to get in commercials. The TV people have always denied it. However, in May, 1967, pro soccer referee Peter Rhodes admitted that he was required to wear an electronic beeper on his shoulder, and when the network (CBS) signaled, he had to signal an "injury," thus allowing time for a commercial.

In her autobiography, Nancy Greene talks about how the

schedule of the Olympic Games tended to be divided to suit the convenience of the TV boys.

But television controls not just when games are played, but whether they are played at all, and how they are played. Simply by giving coverage to some sports rather than others, TV can help ensure that those will be the popular ones.

Pro football, to take one example, struggled along as a sort of freak show of overgrown collegians until TV "created" it as a sport in the militarized era of the Cold War. In some recent football All-Star games, TV is said to have "prohibited" red-dogging the quarterback, in order to give the viewing audience a more wide open spectacle.

Schecter says the main reason the Milwaukee Braves were willing to go through the tremendous hassles of moving to Atlanta was it was a much more lucrative TV market. Similarly, improved TV subsidies were said to be the reason the National Hockey League expanded from six to twelve teams.

Lately ABC has come up with its own new-and-improved brand of hip sports promoter in Howard Cosell, a man whose supposed "tell-it-like-it-is" commentary on sports telecasts does not prevent him from ballyhooing and promoting the ritual with every second word.

In 1970, Bernie Parrish noted: "Chrysler alone spent more than \$13 million to sell their cars to pro football's selective audience of 18-49 age group males in the wholesome setting provided by pro football."

But since the spectacular costs of sponsoring the games are worth it in terms of reaching the most lucrative buying markets, these huge sponsorship costs become one more barrier a smaller company would have to surmount in order to stay in business. In this way, the huge scale of the burgeoning sports-TV business acts as a tremendous stimulant to the growth of monopoly in American business generally.

The amounts of money changing hands in all this are simply staggering. CBS is paying about \$25 million a year for rights to televise pro football. And they more than get it back from the advertisers. At last count, advertising costs for sponsors of the Super Bowl were approaching \$200,000 for a minute of commercial time! Of

course, only the biggest corporations in America can afford the costs. The automobile corporations in America are high on the list (using "manhood" to sell cars).

So the general rule is that television needs sports almost as much as sports needs television. In the era of monopoly capitalism both have the function of stimulating hyperconsumption and fronting for the mass advertiser, from whom both ultimately get most of their financial backing and, therefore, by whom they are ultimately controlled.

It should be pointed out that these advertising costs are added on to the price of consumer goods, so that ultimately the working class is forced to pay the price of its own brain-washing.

Monopoly capitalism needs monopoly capitalist sports and vice versa. The material conditions that create one also create the other.

As we have shown, sports watching helps to develop the sort of passive, acquisitive stance that favors escape or pseudo satisfaction through consumption generally.

Sports machismo is good business. If you can keep the guys hustling after the brass ring of "manliness", you can sell them everything from "a man's deodorant" to "sports cars with drive."

In the final analysis, all this is based not on any special idiocy of



Nancy Greene

the sports world, not even on any special deviousness of mass advertisers, but on the social relations of capitalist production itself. A guy who has to look for his humanity identifying with the super masculine mental of his team obviously is not one who's engaged in creative decision-making and control of work he can really believe in.

Turned into a cog on a job he does not believe in, with a woman whom the system has turned into another cog - or even worse a housewife - his sex life is not likely to be all that great either.

So he chases his manhood - or the illusion of it - where he may, more or less like a hungry mouse in a maze. The success of sports promoters, or promoters generally, is based not on their ability to inculcate "false" needs in people (as Marcuse, for one, seems to believe), but on their ability to turn genuine needs, which the capitalist system cannot satisfy, into vehicles for selling their products.



ALVIN '70

