

Timo Hakulinen

Is Competitive Athletics Suitable for Women?: Discussion of the 1920s

Because of prejudices against it, women's competitive athletics developed rather slowly. Real breakthrough did not occur any earlier than in the 1920s when athletics, regarded as masculine so far, was accepted as suitable for women in the Olympic Games, too.

The discussion concerning women's competitive athletics run high. Those who were against it supported their view by referring to health risks. It is remarkable, that women's gymnastic associations opposed women's competitive athletics, although they otherwise encouraged their physical exercise. The promoters of women's athletics criticized conservative attitudes, for they were not scientifically grounded. They urged women to courageously practise new sports. Their arguments were supported at the end of the 1920s by new findings of research which refuted the supposed health risks.

Physical education at schools pioneered women's athletics. As girls grew, they wanted to continue their sporting hobby and compete. That the press assumed a favourable view towards women's competitive athletics was decisive to its development.

Sanna Eskelinen

Towards Health and Beauty. The Association of Women Gymnasts of Jyväskylä 1917-1939.

The Women Gymnasts of Jyväskylä was established in 1917, the same year that Finland became independent. Women's physical culture was on the rise and there was a need for middle class women to have their own independently run gymnastic association. In their early organizational rules the goal was promote physical education and health care among membership. This reflects from the very beginning teacher-oriented leadership's desire for a community-oriented social education beyond that given by the schools. The polarization of the various organizations after the civil war of 1918 emphasized the middle class and patriotic nature of the Women Gymnasts of Jyväskylä. The club followed the principles of SNLL in their activities and actively promoted beauty and health, and the women's worthy task of being the nurturers of future generations. The membership consisted mainly of office workers, store clerks, teachers, and other middle class trades that were dominated by women. The old call by the Women Gymnasts of Jyväskylä "*to come and go gymnastics and get refreshed from daily work*" created "*more joy and health amidst the daily toil*".

Ulla Kosonen

The Problematic Body: Three stories of physical education at school

The aim of this study is to consider the relationship of school-girls to their bodies. The source material consists of three stories of physical culture at school written by women born in the 1960s. The study problem is what is the significance of a negative experience of one's own body to one's growth. The stories told more of shame and fear than of success and joy, and the story-tellers pondered the development of their relationship to their own

body through the school-years. These stories could be titled 'stories of survival' for they open with becoming conscious of the body-problem, with the measures to solve the problem and with the ultimate solution.

Finally the question whether sufferings in the 'I versus body' -relationship automatically belongs to female adolescence is reconsidered. There is more to it than mere incapability of Western women to value and 'listen' to their bodies. Also the explanation offered by some feminist researchers that the expectations concerning appearance in women's lives are decisive is inadequate. The views of Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen and Monica Rudberg are introduced; they point out that the body is more significant for young girls than for boys in the formation of the psychological sex.

Leena Laine

How to Cross Borders - Women in Sports Organizations in the Nordic Countries

The subject of this article is women's 'coping strategies' in the domain of physical culture and sports in the Nordic countries. The main concern is not with organizations as such; they are, however, viewed as manifestations of the boundaries drawn by two genders.

The first example is the (rare) women's independent federation, like the two women's gymnastics associations in Finland. I will then discuss the experiences of the female pressure groups set up within the field of competitive sports (e.g., the Women's International Athletics Association in the 1920s). Another example is the women's committees established in sports organizations since the 1940s to propagandize for women in sports. The last model is the most common: women have to some extent become integrated into the sports movement, under male domination, with no specific organizational forms. I believe that this situation includes a gender conflict as well, one built into so-called modern sport.

Finally, some specific experiences of women concerning the organizations are discussed in the historical perspective.

Vesa Tikander

No money in Greece - the eventual revival of the Olympic Games

The first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens in April of 1896. The decision to revive the ancient festival had been made at an International Athletic Congress in Paris two years earlier under the inspirational leadership of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, an aristocrat and ardent champion of Anglo-Saxon sport and educational reform in France. Coubertin had not been the first to conceive the idea of reviving the Games, but the international scope of his project was unprecedented. The baron never gave adequate credit to his forerunners who were largely forgotten by subsequent Olympic history.

William Penny Brookes was a country doctor who since 1850 staged an "Olympic" festival at his home village of Much Wenlock in Shropshire. In the 1860s he had cofounded a series of nation-wide Olympic Games but the project failed because of resistance from established amateur athletic circle in London. Another series of Olympic Games had been held in Athens since 1859. Sponsored by the rich merchant Evangelos Zappas, these Games had a strong Greek nationalistic flavour but were largely on the wane by the 1880s. Brookes had contacts with the Greeks, and in 1880, he suggested that international Olympic Games should be held in Athens. In 1890, Brookes hosted Coubertin at Much Wenlock; according to some researchers, the baron got his whole Olympic idea from the old doctor.

Coubertin's project was ultimately successful because he embraced the tenets of amateur athleticism. The authoritative view on the ancient Olympic Games (discarded by modern research) made amateurism the original norm, since threatened by corrupting professionalism. Coubertin's modern Olympic Games, strictly for amateurs, re-enacted the precedence of, ultimately class-based, amateurism, and thus ensured its survival.

The Greeks drew on their earlier Olympic experience to organize a splendid nationalistic festival in 1896. Spiridon Louis, the unlikely marathon winner, was to symbolize Olympic amateurism henceforth: even the poor man can succeed under strict rules. After Athens, Coubertin left the Greeks. Amateurism stayed as the cornerstone of the Olympic movement until the 1980s.

Jari Launonen

From Antwerp to Berlin. The Olympic Games in Finnish Sports Consciousness

Before the Stockholm Olympics in 1912 the Finns were not very conscious of the Olympic Games. It was in the 1920s that the newspapers became more keenly interested in them. In the beginning, their interest was connected to the success of Finnish athletes and the articles were heavily coloured by nationalism. Young and independent Finland urgently needed recognition from abroad and with athletics they tried to reach the limelight of the world. The Olympics was considered an occasion in which Finnish honour and fame was at stake, and the Finns were quite anxious about the continuation of their success. In the 1930s the consciousness about the Olympics was increasing significantly as the news produced more and more accurate information concerning the Games.

The unified 'front of athletics' of Finland was broken by the incessant struggle between the Workers' Athletics Union and its counterpart, the bourgeois Association of Gymnastics and Athletics in Finland. This was reflected in the press, too, and the workers' paper, *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, lifted the workers' Olympics as the most important event in athletics. The support given to top-ranking athletics caused criticism, according to which the Finns should have stayed out of the Olympics of Amsterdam. The bourgeois press could not swallow this, although the original idea was to bring the question about the fitness of the ordinary people to the fore. The glorification of the top-ranking athletics was also to be seen in declaring Paavo Nurmi a professional athlete. The success of the Finnish

athletes was on the decline in the 1930s, and the press taught the public to rejoice the bronze-medal, too. The first and last Olympics of the period was characterized by political involvement, but the attitude changed from a common line of the leftist and rightist papers of the year 1920 to a complete confrontation of the year 1936. Finnish women athletes took part in the Olympics for the first time in Berlin 1936. The attitudes of the press were belittling - women's results were deemed invalid in measuring the superiority of the nations.

Janne Mykrä

The Olympics Never to Come - Helsinki 1940: the information service of the Bureau of Press and Propaganda in 1938-39

The task of this article was to study the information service activities towards the promotion of the Helsinki Olympics of 1940 which were never held. The subject of the study has been the Bureau of Press and Propaganda which was subordinate to the organizing committee of the Olympics. The Bureau officially produced and edited all the advertising and news material for Finland and abroad concerning the progress of the arrangements and the Olympics in general. The Bureau was open only for somewhat more than a year before it was closed as the Winter War broke out. In spite of its short life-span it produced quite a lot of information. Also the planning of the press services for the Olympics had progressed quite well before the arrangements were cut short. The material dispersed by the Bureau concentrated on giving matter-of-fact information on how the arrangements progressed. Of course, the Finns were urged to join the work but the Bureau did not want to arouse Olympic fanaticism in them. Also the material sent abroad was quite moderate in tone; the message was that the Olympics were a normal competition in athletics, although it did not avoid giving the impression that the whole of Finland supported the Games. Far-reaching plans were soon dropped as the Winter War broke out. The Olympics propaganda was replaced by war-propaganda but, notwithstanding one single and desperate appeal, the Bureau itself did not produce any war-propaganda.

Hannu Itkonen

Doves of Peace and Gunfire - Selected Bits of Olympic History

The Olympic movement has been seen as a force promoting peace and understanding between peoples. On the other hand, the movement has had its share of tensions and conflicts and various forms of dishonesty and violence had already been part of the classical games.

The modern Olympic Games got off to a bumbling start. The imprecision of the rules, unclear standards and choice of events resulted in differing interpretations and conflicts. In the early decades of the 20th century it was difficult for the Olympic Games to find their place internationally and they served, for example, as a "side-show" at World's Fairs.

The tasks of the Olympic movement have been repeatedly re-evaluated. The views of the founders of the movement of the unparalleled nature of Western civilization have been the subject of criticism. In particular, the condemnation of the Anthropological Olympics organized in 1904 in St. Louis has been extremely harsh.

The measurability of Olympic performance has made nationalistic competition possible. For instance, the Berlin Games served the aims of the eugenics in Nazi-Germany. During the Cold War sports were also utilized in the struggle between super powers and political systems for hegemony.

The politics related to the Olympics has always extended to the sports arenas. The political measures employed have included the boycott, exclusion from the games and opposition to arranging them. Political events have also been reflected in the sports arena. An example of this was a water polo match between Hungary and the Soviet Union which turned bloody during the Melbourne Olympics as a result of the Hungarian uprising and its subsequent suppression.

The Olympics have provided an important arena for expressing opinions. Finland linked its success at the 1912 Stockholm Games to the struggle for independence. "Running Finland onto the world map" has maintained its importance in the national sports folklore. The most blatant abuse of the Olympics occurred in the early 1970s in Munich, where a raid by Arab terrorists resulted in the death of 17 persons.

The Olympic movement has been unable to rid itself of dishonesty and victims. The use of drugs, in particular, has become a factor casting a long shadow over sports. The critique levelled has also attacked the over-commercialization of the Games and the undemocratic structure of the movement. The Olympic movement will in the future continue to be ridden with tensions and conflicts, and the critics will also find their way to the Olympic gates.

Antti O. Arponen

The Finnish Olympic Literature needs to be studied properly

In Finland, there have been written about sixty significant books on the Olympic Games. The first of them was published in 1920, it was written by the sports reporter Yrjö Halme and it dealt with the Games in Antwerp.

The Olympics from 1920 to 1936 were covered by twelve books which introduced the readers to the sporting events and especially the success of the Finns in them. Well-known authors were Dr Martti Jukola and Professor Lauri Pihkala.

Also in the 1950s quite a few Olympic books came out, some of the, of course, concentrating on the Helsinki Olympics of the year 1952. The decline of the success of Finnish athletes was the reason why not a single book on the Olympics of 1960-1972 was published in Finland.

New enthusiasm was aroused since the Olympics of Montreal, 1976, and during the last twenty there has been published more books on Olympics than never before. The most significant of them is the series called *Suuri Olympiateos*, started in 1978. Tenth volume is about to come out in Autumn, 1996. This series, initiated by a researcher in physical culture, Markku Siukonen and Professor Helge Nygrén (died in 1992) has received international appreciation, too.

Finnish Olympics Literature is largely pure documentation of what happened and tells about the heroic success of the Finnish athletes. It also provides a lot of statistics. What is missing almost totally is analytical and scientific research. Some theses have been written at universities but the wider public cannot usually find them at bookshops.

Arja Hartikainen

Fell skiing and telemark skiing - winter tourism in Lapland

In the 1930's the active women of The Association for Women's Physical Education (SNLL) started promoting the idea of fell skiing. Pallas area in western Lapland became the first scene for winter tourism in Finnish Lapland due to the introduction of SNLL courses in skiing and the building of the Hotel Pallas, the first fell hotel. The schools' skiing holidays began in the winter of 1934-35. This, and the famous skiing competition of Ounasvaara, allured people to Rovaniemi, and further to Pallas, and gradually to other skiing resorts.

In the 1930's fell skiing was considered a fashionable pass time for wealthier, usually well-educated people that lived in towns in Southern Finland. Lapland was an exotic place with untouched beauty and exciting people, the Sami. Hiking or skiing in the fells of Lapland fitted the 1930's ideal of healthy outdoor activity well. The first SNLL skiing courses for women were held in Pallas from March 25 until April 1 in 1934. The lessons included practising various turning techniques. Later in the afternoons the group took longer hikes. The active day ended with dinner and the sauna. The pleasures offered by the winter in Lapland were first enjoyed by these groups of women that crowded the skiing courses at Pallas.

The first slalom slopes were opened towards the end of the 1930's. Lifts were unheard of at those times. Skiers either climbed up or were pulled up by a reindeer. The big skiing resorts for masses were a later phenomenon, and didn't appear until the 1960's and 1970's. Among the first were Ounasvaara and Pyhä.

Today, another form of downhill skiing, telemark, has become very popular. Telemark skiing originated from the steeper slopes of Norway where it was developed in the 19th century. Telemarkis increasingly known as a competitive sport.

Erkki J. Hämäläinen

The Beginning of a Winter Swimmers' Association Humaus 1951-1975

A Winter Swimmers' association called Humaus, which lodged at the Humallahti shore in Helsinki, was founded in 1951, soon after a winter swimming exhibition. The receipts of this exhibition were collected for the Helsinki Olympic Fund. The Humaus had so sharp a membership growth that there were 2100 members in eight years. Most of them (about 60 %) were women. Humaus is said to have been even the greatest winter swimmers' association in the world in those days. The sharp growth resulted from an active propaganda pursued by the association for winter swimming and saving someone from the ice.

Being no more an association of "only a few insane people" the Humaus received a grant from the City Government so that it should be able to build a new larger dressing room for the huge number of members in 1958. The up-to-date room could be used only for a year, for the Humallahti shore was soon closed down because of the water with a high bacterial content.

The Humaus took on lease new quarters: a hexagonal wooden house (previously a Czarist officers' dance pavilion) and an old wharf. However, the distant location, poor services and inadequate equipment did not tempt all the members. That is why the membership of the association dropped abruptly. There were only 354 members in 1962.

The consequence was that the financial situation of the Humaus was very poor. However, the winter swimmers should have had plenty of money so that it would have been possible for them to make the dressing room heat-retaining, repair the wharf and procure a compressor by which the hole in the ice does not freeze. The Helsinki City Sports and Camping Office has continually appropriated funds and also material support for the necessary building and repair work for which the association's own resources would not have been enough. Excellent spirit of comradeship in the Humaus has been an important factor by which these works were sacrificingly and voluntarily completed. It at once saved the funds of the association.

The average age of the members has been rather high, about 50 years. That is why winter swimming for good condition or recovering is most popular as the motto of the Humaus, "It's better to take care of one's health than disease", describes. The Humaus has never had in its rooms a sauna, because a great fluctuation of temperature may be harmful for health.

Erkki Vasara

Youth Associations as a Force Complementing Rural Sports Activity in the 1920s and 1930s

The goal of the Youth Association movement, which was established first in the 1880s in Ostrobothnia and soon spread throughout Finland, was the development of young people into upstanding patriotic citizens who respected moral values and the life-style of the rural

peasantry. In its aims the movement sought to offer its members the possibility of self-development through various cultural interests. Sports, too, chiefly skiing, athletics and gymnastics, have their own place in the work of the youth associations. This article examines the 1920s and 1930s, a time when the Youth Association movement boasted tens of thousands of members in several hundred local associations which mainly had an influence on the rural agrarian milieu.

The most important sports activity was carried out between the wars by SVUL, a bourgeois central sports organization operating after the 1918 Civil War in White circles, and the Civil Guard. A third force was the youth associations. Among the latter sports were competition-oriented and generally concentrated on one skiing and one athletics competition per year at both the local and provincial levels. Gymnastics competitions were also envisioned, at least the leaders of the movement sought to arrange them.

Nor was the enthusiasm for sports generated in the southwestern and southeastern areas of Finland by the youth associations as strong as the movement's leadership had desired. The associations only sent about one-quarter, sometimes one-third, of its representatives to provincial competitions, depending on whether it was a question of skiing or athletics. Furthermore, numerous youth associations had difficulty in organizing local competitions. Many could not find enough individuals passionate about sports activity or even interested in sports. Most - if not almost all - associations, however, organized annual winter and summer competitions. It is also significant that as early as the 1920s, even at the beginning of the decade, some of these competitions included games for women and boys, not just for men.

The competitions were by no means large mass events and the number of participants might even have been extremely modest. It is also clear that many youth associations sent representatives to provincial games who were just formally involved in the association, taking part in no other activities than sports. The sports activities of the youth associations was unquestionably less significant than those of the conventional sports movement and the Civil Guard, but as such in turn complemented the sports culture of the Finnish countryside in the 1920s and 1930s.

Kent Sjöblom

The Case of Jackson Haines - Critical Comments on the Sources Concerning the Expansion of Figure Skating to Finland

Jackson Haines is regarded as a father figure and model for figure skating in many countries, Finland included. The tours of Haines in Finland have, however, been quite sparsely documented in our early literature on physical education. The man called the father of sports in Finland, namely Ivar Wilskman, declared one single day the birth-day of our figure skating. He based his argument on the 'fact' that it was then that Haines performed in Finland for the first time. Unfortunately, Wilskman had got the year and the date wrong. Haines had already visited Finland a few times without arousing any particular enthusiasm in skating. What is more, on the actual day of the performance mentioned

above, 3rd of March, 1875, he performed in Hämeenlinna, not on the ice of Kaisaniemi bond in Helsinki as stated by Wilskman.

Wilskman's stament has been cited by many a later researcher in sports, though they have supplied further information on what Haines did in Finland. The overall picture has, however, remained obscure, so that having shed further light on the subject, I decided to gather scattered information into a new, comprehensive whole.

In my article I set out to ponder, what really was Haines's contribution to the expansion of skating, especially figure-skating, to Finland. In Helsinki, figure skating had become a hobby since the beginning of the 1860s although it was not organized. Stimulus came from abroad already at the time. According to some authorities, skating in high society was sparked by ideas coming from Paris, a city from where many a craze in mode was sent to the world.

Haines visited Finland at least in 1869, 1872, 1874 and 1875 but it was only after the last visit that the Finns got excited about establishing a skating association. Why? What was the significance of Haines in this? Unlike in e.g. Stockholm and Vienna, Haines did not, to my knoledge, give any instruction in skating in Finland - a particularly Finnish school of skaters was not born. The performances were given by a touring artist, Haines, and for money. The enthusiasm aroused cannot, however, be denied, but the Finns skated before Haines, too.

Could we perhaps say that a world-star like Haines was the ultimate sparkle that set the smouldering interest into an open fire?

Henrik Meinander

The din of the drums can be beard from afar. Three perspectives to study millitary exercises in Swedish secondary schools 1863-1917

The task of this article is to discuss three alternative strategies to study the social history of the bourgeoisie. The starting point is provided by the theme of history of body. Military exercises were a conspicuous part of the physical education in secondary schools and they created a bourgeois manifestation foremostly in yearly parades and shooting competitions. Consequently, the social democrats criticised the exercises and were able in 1917 to get them abolished at the Diet.

The first strategy could be called traditionally positivistic. The researcher describes the introduction of the exercises, their development and abolition as a chronological whole. The study focuses on filling up the lacuna in the information concerning the exercises. The second strategy proceeds from a postmodern view of history which castigates the evolutionary, positivistic tradition. The aim is not to reconstruct a indivisible history but to show how subjectively the bourgeois manifestation could be understood. The third strategy is a synthesis of the above mentioned. It is based on Jörn Rüsen's contribution to the topics. The purpose is to unite the postmodern insight of history as a caleidoscope with

a pragmatic utilization of the evolutionary perspective. It should be admitted that history does not exist as an indivisible entity but at the same time it should be realized that the historian is in need of a vision of history's indivisibility in order to think historically.

Heikki Roiko-Jokela

Athletics as a Bridge-builder Between Finland and Estonia

In the 20th century, athletics has become increasingly involved with politics. This is particularly prominent in bilateral relations in athletics. In this, the Finnish-Estonian relations were not an exception, rather the contrary. It may be said that athletics strengthened the national identities of the peoples living in the Russian Empire, it most strongly unified the cultural activities during the period of independence, it rekindled the relations after the Second World War, and it became a bridge-builder between kindred nations as Estonia regained its independence.

The Finnish-Estonian relations in athletics encapsulate the confrontation between official politics and unofficial co-operation. The Finns and Estonians had quite close connections in athletics as well as in cultural sector in general already before the establishment of official relations. For its part, athletics can be regarded as preparation for a positive image of Finland in Estonia which, in its turn, made the establishment of official relations easier.

In times of sovietized Estonia, the relations in athletics provided Estonians opportunities to re-establish contacts with the Finns. The arranging of international matches between the kindred nations contributed to the preservation of the Estonian national identity.

Juha Kanerva

Sports Library of Finland - 50 years of age

The Sports Library of Finland, nowadays situated at the Olympic Stadium of Helsinki, was opened to the public fifty years ago in Spring, 1946. The gathering of its collections was, however, started as early as at the beginning of this century. The initiative came from women gymnasts. One of their leaders, Elin Kallio, brought the idea of the efficient utilization of the literature concerning women's gymnastics forward, but the Library itself was Anni Collan's accomplishment. She dedicated her efforts to the Library and took care that almost all significant books on physical culture and athletics published in Finland and the most essential basic works from abroad entered its collections. The split of women's gymnastics movement into Finnish- and Swedish-speaking sections in 1917 led to the decision that the common library was located in Helsinki University Library. The removal took place in 1922 and it was housed in the University Library as a separate collection which was still taken care of by women gymnasts. This housing was a temporary measure and "own home" was sought for all the time. The building of the Olympic Stadium and the establishment of the Sports Museum Foundation of Finland in 1938 created the preconditions for the removal of the 'women's library for physical culture' to the Sports Museum of Finland. This collection of c. 3500 books was complemented by the collection of Finnish

state's board of athletics and gymnastics (c. 1000 books) and by the collection of Ivar Wilskman (400 books). This new collection was christened the Sports Library of Finland. Anni Collan resigned her duties as the head librarian in 1952 but the collection has been steadily accumulated ever since. Nowadays the collection holds some 26.000 volumes, and the library employs four all-day librarians.

Terminology:

Suomen Urheilukirjasto=Sports Library of Finland

Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto=Helsinki University Library

Suone Urheilumuseosäätiö=Sports Museum Foundation of Finland

Suomen Urheilumuseo=Sports Museum of Finland