

„Panta rei“

(Heraklit)

## *Future trends in the field of sport*

### **Retrospective**

Physical exercises have been performed during the earliest phases of human development. They result from bodily movements required for utility, work, and fight outdoors, leading to basic activities like running, jumping, throwing, lifting, carrying, wrestling, and others that are now trained in delineated areas to facilitate the struggle of existence. The overwhelming number of all modern disciplines thus trace their roots back to those early times, and many of them are directly linked with military applications. All culture groups in all periods of history bear witness to this fact. Two examples shall illustrate it: During antiquity the Olympic Games marked the first heydays of sport and included boxing, wrestling, racing and the like, all of which are disciplines with an undoubtedly military character. Already 560 b.c. a special event for military athletes was part of the programme. Medieval tournaments were in essence ritualized forms of contemporary combat. One always finds that sport and military have common roots, and, as another generalizing statement, one can say both are aimed at forming the body.

Therefore, it is a logical consequence that the military has made and still makes important contributions towards the methodology of physical education. This can be demonstrated by a large number of examples like the manuals in the field of fencing, riding, swimming, and skiing, just to mention a few examples from Central Europe.

Development of sport in the military in this century can be grouped into the three following important periods:

- Before the *First World War* (1914 – 1918) physical training in the armed forces consisted mainly of gymnastics, fencing, horsemanship and marksmanship. As a result of the trench

- war, military commanders discovered the value of the sport-game as a means to build up moral strength and to maintain physical balance. The military competition which took place in PARIS on the grounds created for it through the inspiration of Gen. PERSHING marked the first devoted effort towards sport in the military.
- With the *Second World War* (1939 – 1945) combat techniques came into play, based on human and land factors; soldier-athletes, parachutists and combat swimmers appeared, as well as fighter pilots whose physical and sport training had to be intensive and multi-farious. Sports practiced by the military began to get organized.
- The third period is already closely connected with CISM. Its foundation in early 1948, following the short experience of the *Allied Forces Sports Council (AFSC)*, provided military sport with the impetus and the appeal that its promoters had envisioned. Sports units began to take root all over. The CISM-clinic organized in 1968 at the French sport school in FONTAINEBLEAU discussed the current state of military sport and noted that the methods used in physical training of the military were taking more and more inspiration from the methods practiced by athletes in competition. As to *top level sport*, which actually in a high number of countries is a cause of national interest, the armed forces meanwhile have become a main sponsor. Their activities in this respect show a tendency of growing contribution and, not to forget, most of them are combined with a general training of the soldier-athletes which will enable them to manage their non- and post-sport social and professional life.

An analysis of the recent past of modern sport from an overall point of view clearly shows that sport has been influenced by profound changes of society(ies) in the last few decades.

A very important segment of the general restructuring of society is that of the changing set of values which has accompanied the changing expectations in the occupational sphere. So, for example the importance of the concepts of discipline, adaptation, achievement, subordination, professional success, high income, obedience, and allegiance has dwindled in favour of self-determination, communication, and creativity.

In this context the most significant trait of sport in Europe is the increasing importance attributed from the fifties onward to competition, results and the more formal conduct of

sports events, with an intensification of rivalry, victory, defeat and rules and regulations. Sport is the primary domain of achievement-oriented boys and men, most of whom come from the mainstream of society. As such sport increasingly reflects the structural values of modern industrial society. These are work as predominant feature (exhausting training at the expense of pleasure) and success (victory at any cost), associated with more professionalism for the sake of money, and bureaucracy for the sake of management of sport institutions. This goes hand in hand with a reversal of sports values, the intrinsic values of which become more and more diluted by the more superficial elements coming from external sources such as the economic or political entities, which have an impact on sport.

The sixties were characterized by a lack of bodily exercise and by the concurrent civilizational diseases, directly attributable to industrialization and the influence of technology on our daily lives. As a result the number of *keep fit* and informal *jogging/walking* activities rose with the emergence of a new definition of the purpose of sport, albeit in a rudimentary form.

A truly exhaustive and fundamental discussion of the real purpose of sport was generated under the influence of decisive socio-economic changes, encompassing environmental matters, computerization, affecting our everyday lives, increased leisure time, the fear of a nuclear apocalypse, which was associated with criticism of the very basis of society, and subsequently with the emerging *New Games*-movement. In this context, the *achievement* has been criticized both in the field of sport and outside, where the main focus of criticism was that a pattern of motivation from outside had given that concept an all too lop-sided image, leading to permanent pressure to achieve, to alienation of achievements, and to recklessness, so that sensual and emotional aspects were quashed to make room for targeted actions. According to these critics, in the final analyses modern industrial society will only judge any measure of achievement in economic terms and with a naive worship of growth and the quest for record-breaking feats regardless of quality of life, cooperation, or solidarity.

Therefore the *New Games*-movement of the early eighties promoted joy and an element of entertainment in general, placing greater emphasis on spontaneity, creativity, and self-appreciation together with self-fulfilment. They wanted to moderate competition by incorporating elements of cooperation, leading to a *soft war*, to increase sensuality and the

emotional aspects in playful games, leading to a *soft touch*, and to advertise an increased number of games in which training is performed by athletes all together, irrespective of age, sex, and level of skills. This quest for a new self-appraisal of sport has not yet been gratified as such, but we are witnessing a profound change in progress.

In this context, three basic trends are emerging as decisive elements of sport in the near future.

### ***Competitive sport***

This first trend is a mere continuation of the general idea of sport in its traditional sense. Its legitimacy and identity are mainly based on the set of values, governing our industrial and work-oriented society. Everyday routine in the field of sport is still governed by the concepts of achievement, competition, record, asceticism, planning, efficiency, standardization, differentiation of the roles played by the sexes, and leisure time, the latter mainly understood to provide regeneration in a working environment.

### ***Leisure time sport***

Post-industrial values that can be comprehensively characterized by the terms ecology, hedonism, cooperation, participation, leisure time, and quality of life, are crucial in the genesis of the second basis trend that is exemplified in the exploding and far-reaching development of a hedonistically oriented *leisure time sport* which is mainly characterized by a special need for play, enjoyment, and adventure in the field of sport, along with a reduced dependence on clubs and a pronounced detachment from orthodox norms and roles.

Thrilling experiences, a spontaneous feeling of happiness and well-being are the essential ingredients of a new culture of bodily movement in sport in which *soft*, as opposed to *hard* kinds of games are preferred over a long-term planned training programme that is quite demanding. A further important trait is the strongly affinity of hedonistic *leisure time sport* with social life not related to sports activities. The result is that social life is becoming more sports-oriented, as is shown by the emergence of *active vacationing*, and particularly by the

trend to counteract the increasing isolation and anonymity of the individual in our mass society by supporting the motto *sport for all* and by reviving the concept of a *village square* as a meeting place for generations and sexes.

### ***Fitness sport***

The third main trend is that of fitness and health-related sports which are developing just as quickly. It is a reaction to bodily shortcomings as an immediate result of our high-tech world and thus as a biological regulator to stimulate bodily movement.

It will take a different presentation to discuss the state-of-health awareness among people, particularly with regard to smoking, obesity, and psychologically or socially induced stress as risk factors, but as a general rule, one can assume that *fitness sport* is understood, at least in higher strata of society, as a form of caring one's body. Finally, *fitness sport* grew in its importance when medicine pushed for more cost-effective measures for disease prevention. Nowadays, sport is recognized for its therapeutical qualities at least and, increasingly, as a social service as well.

As a near-term perspective, sport will develop as a result of the three trends mentioned above. Of course special changes in our social set-up will have pronounced effects also during this time, depending on the degree of importance attributed to sport. Notwithstanding this fact, the following albeit subjective expectations can be linked to the various categories.

- In *competitive sport* the quest for performance will generally continue and will result in a further increase of achievements both, at the top level and in terms of the overall standard in all relevant disciplines.
- In general, better performance will not be achieved through extra training time, but by improved training quality and other circumstances, affecting training and competition. Relative performance enhancements will directly relate amongst other things to the degree to which doping can be reduced or is tolerated.
- Structural changes in the form of increases are expected both, with regard to an increase in the age and the competitive experience of competitors, and the higher number of

disciplines performed by individuals. In general, the declining share of young people in the total population and the waning attraction of *competitive sport* will, however, reduce the pool of people from which top-notch competitors can be selected.

- A further increase in the number of competitions, most of which are distributed over the whole year, and the demand to have a maximum potential for performance at many different periods of time, will inevitably bring about an increased level of professionalism in the field of *competitive sport*. In its extreme version, *competitive sport* will see an increase in the cost of producing maximum achievements and will thus be increasingly more dependent on those sports organizations functioning according to the laws of applied economics which retain the backing and interest of sponsors and the mass media. These organizations will grow bigger, creating a situation where sport as such will become supplanted by showbusiness aspects.
- To maximize indirect profits, the still rising means and activities provided for sport by private and public sources will lead to more selection, from which only a few particularly attractive telegenic disciplines will profit.
- However, changes in the area of sport ethics, induced by the constraints of professional sport, will not be limited to that narrow sector, but will influence the intrinsic values of *competitive sport* as a whole.

As far as *leisure sport* is concerned, it is accepted generally speaking that it is in this field that the most sweeping changes are to be expected both, in terms of quantity and quality.

- The demand will increase for those types of sport, games, and callisthenics, not requiring special techniques, the comprehensive knowledge of rules, or standardized sport facilities, or equipment.
- Long-term allegiance to individual disciplines will decline as well as club membership; in both cases fluctuation will increase.
- In close connection with the trends mentioned above, the homogeneity of club members will decrease.
- Traditional sports clubs will increasingly have to face the competition of commercial enterprises.

- Together they will contribute to a marked improvement of infrastructure, purpose-built for specific disciplines.
- The coach's role will shift towards that of a sports animator.
- Disciplines that receive strong financial support or even those devised by industry, combined with the popularization of hitherto elitist disciplines will foster the further growth of sports equipment and sports wear industries.

### ***Fitness sport***

- *Fitness and health sport* will gain popularity because health is used as a vehicle to promote sport and because people are becoming increasingly more health-conscious, particularly those over 35.
- Sport will become a specialized means for rehabilitation after illness or accident both, with regard to its application and with regard to the jobs and institutions employed in this sector.

With particular reference to the effects on sport in the military, it is interesting to see the *trends in the development of disciplines*, and to find out the future *relationship among* such factors as *awareness of health, body and sport*.

Any prognosis concerning the development of individual disciplines must of course be based on the present situation and requires a thorough examination of the conditions prevailing in the respective society, the development of which governs the shape of sport in the future. One of the special characteristics of the changes in connection with sport disciplines is the fact that the specific conditions, competencies, requirements, and sets of values of the various people who are active in sport have caused considerable *shifts* from one discipline to another. Such shifts are particularly evident in a general reduction of the importance of traditional disciplines, whereas relatively young one are gaining in popularity.

A breakdown of active people in the field of sport by *sex* shows that there are still more men than women playing sport, but that the gap is closing little by little with young and very popular disciplines having an almost equal share of male and female participants.

Regarding *sports motivation*, one can say that this is largely determined by age, sex, and both, the individual's lifestyle and level of education. As expected, the importance of health as a motive for sport increases with age, whereas the motive for performance decreases. As far as joy and pleasure derived from sport are concerned, the balance between the sexes seems to be even. Motivation through performance, however, varies considerably with the individual discipline, but men tend to be more performance-oriented than women.

As has been pointed out before, expected changes in the popularity of sports disciplines can only be seen in connection with the development of society. *Demographic changes* as quantifiable factors in Central Europe have brought about steady decreases for many years. Further substantial changes can be expected in various age and sex brackets, and in various regions. It is clear that a decreasing number of young people will lead to an increasing proportion of adults and senior citizens. This will obviously generate a shift of motive away from performance towards other forms.

In addition to an upsurge in sports activities in general, changes in the *ratio between work and spare time* available will make it more difficult for disciplines with large teams to have all necessary players available at the scheduled training hours, or for matches/competitions.

Similar consequences can be expected due to the higher incidence of *people's mobility*, a trend connected with a shift of general interest towards the spheres of leisure time and holidays, which is accelerating.

Finally, individual disciplines may experience changes in popularity as a result of *varying lifestyles* and of a process of *civilization*, which is reflected in behaviour and behavioural patterns, mainly favouring disciplines in which self-discipline is very important and/or which are characterized by quite some bodily distance between team members and opponents.

A few *projections for some sports disciplines in Central Europe* may illustrate the before-mentioned statements.

- The number of active soccer and handball players will drop. The lower number of young males and the pronounced reduction in player's availability for away games and training will make it more and more difficult for teams to recruit active players. Even an excellent



infrastructure will not be able to compensate for this detrimental development in that respective field of sport.

- For the forthcoming years, tennis, squash, golf, cross-country skiing, and cycling will experience healthy increases. In all likelihood, the reduced share of young people in the population which is detrimental to sports, will be compensated by the special attraction of individual disciplines, some of which have been set up in recent years, and by an increased share of sports-active adults. Better standards of living and a higher level of education will have stimulating effects on sport activities based on the expected shift in the ratio between work and spare time. The still growing infrastructure both, in places where people live and where they spend their holidays, will also have beneficial effects.
- As a spin-off from the already subsiding wave of jogging/marching, other, partly new forms of endurance sports will come to the fore both, as competitions (city long-distance events, and marathons), and for leisure time and fitness activities (trekking, bicycle trekking).
- The further growth of the alpine region for leisure time and holidays will support the above development and lead to a popularization of a number of young disciplines (paragliding, mountain-biking, snow-boarding, trekking in the Alps).
- The tendency towards competitions in various disciplines that are dissimilar, to be organized in one event (*iron man*) will continue, because they are especially attractive for top athletes with different sports interest.

With regard to *interactions between awareness of health, body and sport* one can start from the fact that generally speaking sport is still considered an ideal means of supporting health. To remain healthy or to regain health is thus considered an important motive for sports activities. For people who are engaged in sport, the notion of health is an all-englobing state-of-mind which ranges from the reverse feeling of not being ill, to any ideas connected with the activity as such, to the positive feelings resulting from the permanent feedback between body and soul, to the expectation of living longer and to largely maintaining a high level of fitness.

To thoroughly understand the concept of *health awareness*, one must know that it is closely connected with the *awareness of one's body*, the individual manifestations of which (perception of body language, self-assessment, social environment and control) include a strong social component. Thus, the sensitivity towards one's own body largely depends on the social stratum the individual is part of and results in a varying somatic culture. People higher up in the hierarchy are more interested in and sensitive towards their own body; they spend more money on health food. Conversely, members of lower strata in society think of their body as an instrument; they do not take as much care of it, and it is in this sector where the proportion of smokers is highest. This may serve to explain why people develop diverse, often very unhealthy patterns of life in their attempts to attain their goals of life, even though health in general is an undisputed ingredient for a meaningful life.

A similar situation can be found if one looks at the relationship between *health and sport awareness*, since practice shows that sport, despite its theoretical purpose, is increasingly confronted with aspects which are detrimental to health. These are mainly the easily recognizable health problems resulting from the extreme success-related pressure, not only in professional sport, but also from overemphasizing the concepts of achievement at almost any level of competence. The increasing use of drugs to improve one's achievements manifests the tendency of disregarding one's body which then becomes a mere instrument for achievement.

Another development that gives rise to concern, but which cannot be recognized right away, is the dissociation of *sport awareness* from its original values, and a trend towards an increasing adaptation to the consumer habits of a mass society. More often than not people think that their extremely negative attitude towards a healthy life can be compensated for by actively taking part in sport activities which will seemingly result in a healthy body per se. While adventure and social contacts in sport are overstressed, *health awareness* tends to be disregarded at the same time.

### **Conclusions**

These reflections on the subject at hand are based on the conditions prevailing in a part of one continent, a continent that has made important contributions towards the development of sport. Even if the findings that have been presented are representative for that region, they do not apply directly to the countries of other continents. They are, however, intended to initiate similar analyses there, so that comparisons can be made.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this presentation for the sum total of CISM member countries can be summarized in the following general findings which are rarely mentioned, because they seem to be self-evident. But they tend to be forgotten in the course of daily routine, and therefore it is important to remind you of them in the form of a concluding statement:

- Sport is a microcom of society. As society undergoes a permanent process of change, the wide-spread manifestations of sport too are part and parcel of that change.
- Developments in the field of sport of the military cannot be looked upon in an isolated way; they are permanently influenced by sport in general.
- Competitive sports in the armed forces react much faster and more directly to changes than in all their other sports activities.
- The armed forces themselves contribute to the development of sport in their respective countries. So they also play a role in the rapid changes in sport; changes that are much more pronounced and visible in the competitive field as mentioned before.