

Lecture 7: Humanistic Critique of Sports

- I. What is the problem?
 - ▶ A. Unhealthy emphasis on competition and winning– why unhealthy?
 - ▶ B. Too much spectatorship
 - 1. Not enough participation
 - 2. Focus on small number of sports
 - ▶ C. Exclusion of entire groups of people
 - 1. Handicapped
 - a. Physically
 - b. Mentally
 - 2. People with certain physiques

VIDEO: Columbia – the 33 game losing streak and breaking the streak

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- II. History and origins of attempts to counteract the competitive focus and/or elitism of current institutions of sport
 - ▶ A. Social background of the times in which these arose: Dates: 1960-1985
 - 1. "Beat" generation, late 1950's
 - 2. 1960's – what was happening?
 - a. Anti-Vietnam war, "hippies", Hair
 - b. 1963 Betty Friedan – beginning of women's movement
 - c. 1964 Civil Rights Act, Free Speech Movement at Berkeley
 - d. 1968 urban uprisings in response to assassinations
 - e. 1969 Stonewall Rebellion → Gay Liberation Front
 - f. 1972 Nixon resigns
 - g. 1981 AIDS is discovered
 - h. 1990 ADA becomes law
 - 3. Summary: What is going on here?
 - Resistance to authority, militarism, and conventional practices
 - Push for rights for excluded groups

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- B. The "New Games" movement- 1966. This has most direct ties to the ferment of the 60's
 - ▶ 1. Several contradictory movements, although all had a focus on participation
 - a. Stewart Brand (1966) concerned that Vietnam war was too distant and abstract
 - Wanted “peaceniks” to recognize aggressiveness and competitiveness in selves so as to be able to combat it
 - Developed “slaughter” – intentionally offensive name for a game in which people were “killed” by being pushed off a mat
 - b. George Leonard came at it out of not liking competition – wanted creative forms of play
 - c. Pat Farrington wanted games that develop trust and cooperation – back to “play days?”
 - ▶ 2. First New Games Tournament – October 1973 on open land north of San Francisco. Some of the games: Rules – play hard, play fair, nobody hurt
 - Earthball
 - New frisbee game
 - Infinity volleyball

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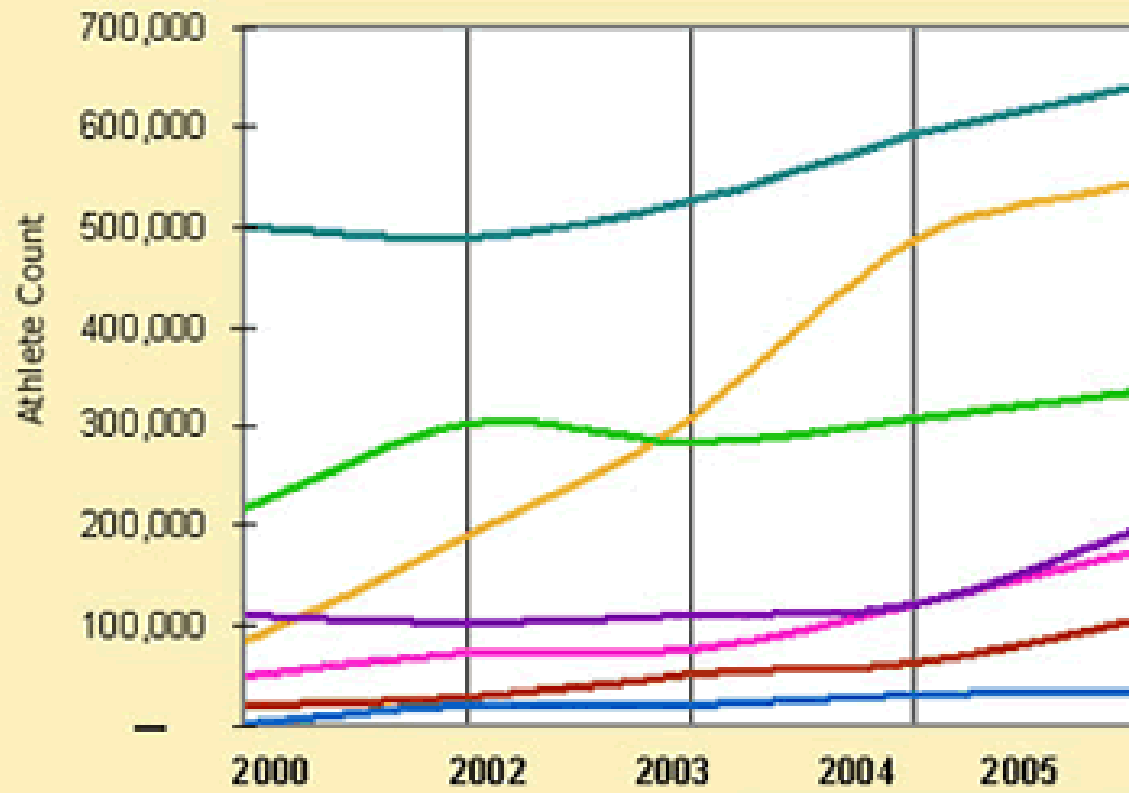
- 3. Later development – through parks and recreation people. “We had always felt that it just wasn’t right for only five people out of a class of 100 to be able to play ‘on the team’.”
 - New games were played in Oakland /Hayward parks
 - Institutionalized as the New Games Foundation.
 - No references to it after 1981
- 4. Bernie De Koven – *The Well-played Game*.
 - Consults with management teams
 - Related to the programs where people go out in the woods and do trust exercises
- ▶ C. The Paralympic Games. Recognized by the IOC – “part and parcel of the Olympic Games.” Usually held in same venues right after the Olympics
 - 1. First held in 1960 in Rome. 400 athletes/23 countries
 - 2. In Atlanta in 1996, games started 10 days after end of Olympics. There were 3500 athletes (and staff) from 104 countries.
 - 3. “In Athens 2004, a record number of 136 countries participated at the Paralympics, making this the largest Games in Paralympic history.” (Website)
 - 4. Claim to be “the second largest sporting event in the world” Aren’t, as we shall see later.

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- 5. “Paralympic” does not refer to paralysis but rather means “next to” or “parallel”
- 6. Purpose (see website)
- 7. Qualifications – must belong to USOC/USPC affiliated disabled sports organization. Qualify through trials sanctioned for their disability group.
- 8. Founded well before the movement for access by the disabled, which led to the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ▶ D. Special Olympics – What do you know about their origins?
 - 1. Began in 1968 when Eunice Shriver organized the first International Special Olympic Games in Soldier Field, Chicago
 - Earlier in the 60's she started a day camp for people with developmental disabilities
 - Saw that they were far more capable in sports and physical activities than people had thought
 - 2. Only organization authorized by IOC to use the word “Olympic” except themselves [more on this later] Headquarters in D.C.
 - 3. Accredited programs in all 50 states + territories and 141+ other countries
 - 4. Patterned after Olympic games – hold 15,000+ meets, games, tournaments in 22 official summer and winter sports each year.
 - 5. Eligibility - Age 8 or older, certified as having “cognitive delays.” Put on age-similar teams with comparable abilities givin every athlete a reasonable chance to win.



Projected Special Olympics Growth to 2005



- Africa
- Asia Pacific
- East Asia
- Europe/Eurasia
- Latin America
- Middle East/North Africa
- North America

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- 6. Over 500,000 volunteers run local programs
- 7. Philosophy and mission (website). Oath.
- 8. Benefits

VIDEOS: Brave in the Attempt, Special Olympics Ice Skaters

- ▶ E. Ultimate Frisbee – What do you know about it?
 - 1. Origin In 1967 at Columbia High School in Maplewood, NJ
 - Joel Silver proposes an official frisbee team for the school
 - Had played “frisbee football” at a camp that summer
 - Was a non-jock, academic, nerdy kid; idea was to have a sport they could play
 - Started as a lark, an “anti-establishment, countercultural game”
 - Original game allowed running with the disk, line of scrimmage, downs, officials. No provision for what is now called “the spirit of the game” but a foul was “any action sufficient to arouse the ire of your opponent”. Turned into a more soccer-like game
 - 2. Now played on a 70 X 40 field with 25 yard end zones, 7 players per side (this is flexible). Coverage man-to-man. Scoring by pass to end zone.

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- 3. “**Spirit of the game** – ultimate stresses sportsmanship and fair play. Competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of respect between players, adherence to the rules, and the basic joy of play.”
 - Self-refereeing of fouls
 - If person who is accused of fouling disagrees, the play is done over
- ▶ F. The Gay Games – origins in attempts to counteract the competitive focus and/or elitism/exclusiveness of current institutions of sport
 - 1. History - SF Arts and Athletics founded in San Francisco in 1981
 - Dr. Tom Waddell - 1968 Olympic decathlete wanted to produce first “Gay Olympic Games”
 - Purpose and philosophy
 - 2. USOC got temporary restraining order barring use of the name. AFAA removed “Olympic”. Has been Gay Games ever since. Why did they object? *Discussion*. Appealed.
 - 3. Later history
 - Gay Games I and II were held in San Francisco.
 - I - 1982 - 1350 athletes in 11 sports. Budget \$125,000
 - II - 1986 - 3500 athletes in 17 sports
 - Case finally decided at Supreme Court, June 1987, 5 to 4 . Lower court decision barring use of “Olympic” stood.

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- Seattle, July 1989, international group met and organization became the Federation of Gay Games.
- Gay Games III - held in Vancouver, B.C. 1990. 7500 athletes in 23 sports. Budget of \$2.1 million
- Gay Games IV held in New York, but only after battles with U.S. immigration about admitting people with AIDS.
 - Shalala (HHS Secretary) had to register games as a “designated event”
 - March 1994 Janet Reno signed blanket order allowing contestants to enter without special visas
 - 11,000 participants from 45 countries, budget of \$7 million
- Gay Games V held in Amsterdam. 1998 14,715 participants. 42% women
- 4. Gay Games VI at Aussie Stadium 2-9 November 2002,
 - Used many venues from the 2000 Summer Olympic Games.
 - More than 11,000 athletes from more than 70 countries
 - What does this say about paralympics being second largest?