

THE ETHICAL VALUE OF SPORTS FOR WOMEN.

BY

FRANCES A. KELLOR, GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE INTER-MUNICIPAL
RESEARCH COMMITTEE, NEW YORK CITY.

A DISCUSSION of the ethical value of sports for women involves two considerations, difficult to separate, but which must be clear in the minds of the persons who instruct in sports.

The first is the value to the individual, and the second that to the community. In most of the training, up to the present time, much emphasis has been placed upon the former, while the latter is obscured in a hazy future. "That which promotes the best development of the individual raises the standard of the community," is a statement recognized in a general way by all educators. But communities maintain certain institutions, not primarily because they benefit the individual, but because they are essential to the integrity, the progress, and the very life of the community itself. "Public policy," the "general good," are some of the names in which many things are done. From the community standpoint, sports for women have a value, at least potentially, and the realization of this power depends upon those who are to train the women.

The ethical value from the individualistic standpoint may be grouped under three heads, physical, æsthetic, and psychological; by carrying the results of the training along these lines into activities other than those of the school, I hope to bring out the fourth,—the social standpoint,—and to make clear why the community should support this work for women, not only as a part of its educational system, but as a part of its recreative system, which has become so important a part of its administration within the past few years. Is it because of the purely individual development that the city maintains playgrounds with paid directors? Is it not because the city realizes that the death rate, the poverty rate, the criminal rate, and the working capacity of the people depend in some way upon the recreation afforded them, and the education which they obtain through it?

If, from an ethical point of view, which concerns both the individual and the community, we are to develop games for women, the principles underlying them must differ from those which are carried out in men's sports to-day. Doubtless the same principles are equally necessary for men and women, but men's athletics to-day should not serve as a model for women's athletics. These essential principles are:

(1) Sports must be conducted for the good of the number, and not for the purpose of getting good material for championship teams; they are not for the purpose of developing record breakers, or track winners, but that each one may have equal opportunity and training;

the end desired is not to play well in a contest, but to better fit the individual for her place in life. (2) The predominating note in women's sports should always be the joy and exhilaration and fun of playing, not the grim determination to win at any cost. Social features should be retained as a part of these sports lest they become too hard and business-like. (3) Women's games are for themselves and for their school or college. With few exceptions, the standards of women's athletic contests do not possess sufficient educational value to justify giving them before indiscriminate audiences who pay admission fees.

To maintain these principles, the training must be given with a knowledge of what may be accomplished on all four sides—physical, æsthetic, psychological, and social. The ethical value of games on the physical side is evidenced by normal living, clean thinking, and by control of appetites and passions. These result from having a sound body and an outlet for energy. I have often thought as I have watched working women trying to find this outlet in the miserable dance halls, or walking the crowded streets, that when we have public playhouses for women, where the play instinct can be satisfied through well conducted games, then we may hope for normal living, clean thinking, and self-control.

The æsthetic value of games is expressed by improved personal habits and appearance which, while bringing pleasure to others, indicate a higher standard of living.

On the psychological side, this ethical value is expressed by the developing or strengthening of mental and moral qualities, which enable the individual to direct her effort wisely and to function successfully in life's activities.

In thus outlining the value of games, I am not theorizing, but giving the experience of five years of coaching in the University of Chicago, where, with hundreds of girls, it has been possible to almost measure this growth; and from years of work with the little residents who came to the settlement gymnasias, and with whom moral development was like tracing lines on an unwritten page. Neither is this belief in the value of games limited by what has already been accomplished, for the training of girls and women in sports has not only been limited, but for the most part the instruction has been given by untrained instructors, or by men who have held the existing ideals of men's work, and not that previously outlined as essential for women.

What are some of the qualities which sports may be influential in developing? I need scarcely dwell on the physical side, for endurance, skill, precision, eo-ordination, etc., are well known to result from careful training. To be able to do physical things well, has an ethical value not only in the attitude toward life which it induces, but pride in "good condition" prevents many a pitfall into which one indifferent to this may stumble.

The æsthetic value lays stress upon the beauty and good form of

games. It is essential in playing games that women stand well, walk well, run well, throw well, and have a neat, attractive appearance. The habits and manners of players on the field are also a part of the æsthetic training. Disagreeable expressions, uncouth language, squealing and yelling, crying, lying about the floor, eating between halves of games, masculinity, boisterousness,—the absence of all these are the result of emphasizing the æsthetic feature of games. New players are inclined to think any old kind of suit or color will do; that slang is the language most appropriate, and strength the main asset for a successful game. When I first introduced the rule that form was one of the requirements for making the university class teams, and that no girl who persisted in careless dress and playing could play in any match game, there was considerable indignation. Before the close of the year scarcely a girl needed a reprimand for appearance. Some girls who had been exceedingly careless admitted that improvements in street dress and manner were due to the gymnasium. The appearance and demeanor of a team is a criterion of the part which æsthetics have in the training. Certainly, by due regard to the æsthetic side, grace can be developed. I had one good basketball player who never stopped a ground ball without falling down and rolling. When I talked to her about it, she said she was "top-heavy" and couldn't help it. I took her measurements and gave her some special work, and with this remarked that she played well enough to make her class team, but for this unfortunate tendency. In less than two months she had entirely overcome this habit and was one of my most graceful players. The æsthetic side of games has appealed strongly to many of the little settlement players, who have thus had their eyes opened on a new world.

The mental and moral training by means of games opens a wide field for thought. American life offers to woman great opportunities domestically, socially, and professionally, and in each domain they strive for success. Success is based upon competition, and competition is the keynote of organized games. If this is true, one of the values of games is to maintain *fair, economic, and co-operative* rules of competition. Note the three adjectives, and it will be seen that these rules of competition do not to any extent underlie much of our modern social or business methods. And yet the athletic man who has played according to the rules of the game is ordinarily fairer than he who knows nothing of clean sport, if other things in his training are equal. Is there any reason why women in their respective fields of competition should be less fair or less in need of a training which gives them such rules of competition?

It would be impossible to enumerate all of these qualities, but for the purposes of illustration they may be grouped into mental qualities and moral qualities. In the first group are included such as observation, attention, concentration, memory, imagination, initiation, reason, and will power. These are developed most highly by the

various games of ball, from its simplest forms up to those requiring fine team work, as baseball and basketball. When the girls first begin their work in sports, they frequently have their minds on something else; they do not use their opportunities; their attention is easily distracted; they forget to play, or cannot remember their rules or their team members or instructions; they cannot foresee the results of a given play; they change their minds half a dozen times while they hold the ball; or they play "as though they had no heads on." Girls are given to imitation rather than initiation, and all sports bring out the initiative spirit. There can be but little copying of what others do, for the action must be spontaneous and usually varies from the last play made. One day last summer, while working with a squad of green baseball players—teachers, most of them—one of them made a splendid hit, good for at least three bases. She ran to first, and when she was nearly to second came back to first. In desperation and amazement I rushed to first and asked the reason. "Oh," was the reply, "I noticed the first baseman was a friend of mine, and I came back to tell her something."

An illustration of the absence of reasoning is the following: The ball had been claimed by two basketball players. Taking the ball, I said, "Heels together so I can throw it up between you, and jump for it when it comes down." Just then some one asked for an explanation of a play, and imagine my amazement when I turned back and found that each player instead of having her own heels together, had turned her back to the other so the four heels of the two players were together. And in this way they were to jump for the ball when it came down!

I have seen girls with these qualities very poorly developed grow into steady players, using rare judgment, have seen them grasp the slightest advantage, and use signal codes successfully. These qualities developed on the field are the same ones which lead to success in the social or business world. These are the qualities which characterize a player as one to be depended upon—the certainty that a player will do the things assigned to her. In the first games of basketball, how many guards stick to their own opponents? Every one plays every one else's position, and no one can tell what will be done in an emergency. During a game of indoor baseball with green players, a good hard ball was batted past centre field and went under a spring board. Two men were standing near, and as the girl ran up and saw the ball under the board, she hesitated and then said, "Would one of you men mind getting that ball for me?" Of course the result was a home run for the other side.

These mental qualities, no matter how finely developed, make a technically perfect game, but the real essence is left out unless the moral qualities are developed at the same time. These give the spirit, the enthusiasm, the life to the sport, and make it the tremendous educational force that it is. Illustrations of these are self-control,

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unselfishness, sense of honor, self-sacrifice, self-confidence, fairness, democracy of spirit, modesty, and decision.

Self-control must be learned before a game can even proceed, and the first two lessons are in promptness and obedience. Take a struggling little mass of East Side children. They want to expend their energy and show off, and they have hitherto accomplished this by chasing, shoving, pinching, and kicking, by tattling, complaining, sulking, or even going home with a "mad on." Obedience to orders is the first step out of this maze of energy,—obedience when every faculty and muscle is alert. They must listen to rules, they must play the position given, and they are fouled, relentlessly but fairly, when they do not follow the rules. In a little while they are actually controlling themselves, and preventing fouls and delays of the game. A little later comes a more advanced expression of this control. At first the girl throws too hard, or she runs too much, or she complains every time she is run into "that it is on purpose," or she makes wild plays in her desire to show off. But this disappears, and her throws are just right. When run into, she ignores it, in a friendly spirit, and she works with her team, throwing often to her rival to whom she has hitherto refused to speak. Oftentimes girls have come asking to play at opposite ends of the gymnasium because they do not like each other, and threatening, "I won't play if I have to be with her." The game, with a little skill, can invariably be managed to make them forget such differences.

It is possible to so perfect players in obedience, in promptness, and in self-control that in a game of basketball there is no halt or break whatever after the scoring of a basket, and no waiting for a line up for positions.

Through games self-confidence is taught. While all the players work together, each has her own responsibility and she must feel that she can play her position, for there is no one but herself upon whom she can rely if a ball comes her way. Decisions must be made quickly and accurately, or an "error" is the result, plainly credited to the player. On the other hand, over-confidence brings a sure defeat and can be easily detected.

If competition underlies all games, it is equally true that unselfishness is the basis of all team work. The ability to work together requires at every point an unselfish adjustment. One of the first things learned is to appreciate others' ability, for there is no time to take refuge in delusions about oneself. When a player first begins there is a great deal of egotism. *I want to play basket; I want to score; I want to play with the bigger girls; I want to make the team.* One of my greatest difficulties with little girls, who are less conscious of this egotism, is that in a new class of forty or more, every one clamors to play forward. It is to the forwards that most of the credit falls. When they have had a year's team work, this selfishness largely disappears, and if any one doubts that this result can be

brought about let her take that crude material—a settlement class—and experiment.

Unconsciously they grow from individual work into team work; *I* is replaced by *we*, and sometimes in basketball half a dozen team plays will be made before any one throws for goal. When one girl does most of the scoring during a game, it usually means that the instructor has not had in mind the ethical training, but has allowed the selfishness of one or two good players to predominate.

Closely allied with unselfishness comes the great task of developing the spirit of fair play. Fair play does not mean taking every advantage possible under the rules, or running the risk of being penalized for close violation. In every game there come opportunities when a little trick, some little mean thing or some petty act will bring an advantage. Small cheatings and petty meannesses will soon be detected by an observant instructor, and girls even more than boys should be held strictly to the spirit and rules of the game, and be judged solely by the results of their playing. A part of fair play is also to take a fair share of the blame. Among new players, one constantly hears: "It wasn't my fault;" "She did that;" "I could not help it." I had a curious illustration of an effort to take responsibility when I had a class of girls in one of the preparatory schools. I had had them but a little time, and had told them they must not cry or lose their tempers when they lost. Their first match game was an exceedingly trying one, and they lost. As one of the guards came downstairs, big tears stood in her eyes and she met one of her forwards coming up, with big tears running down her face. In a very indignant tone the guard said: "What are you crying about? You know our coach doesn't want us to do that, and besides if any one cried I ought to, for it's all my fault."

Loyalty and a sense of honor are closely linked with fairness, certainly a sense of honor—the lack of which in girls makes them the contempt of boys and the despair of men—is one of the most difficult qualities to develop. Women, by temper and by training, are individualistic, and do not at first realize their responsibility when being put on their honor. They cannot cheat, or bluff through, or get credit for things which they do not do. They cannot lay blame on others or deny their deeds. At first when they do not win, they sneak off in tears, but if sense of honor and loyalty are made to mean anything, after a little training they are to be found as a team standing together bravely, congratulating the other team in defeat or modestly accepting their share in victory. Certain rules regarding health, times of playing, etc., must invariably be laid down for girls. At first their attitude is, "If she will not catch me at it," and later, "It isn't the square thing to do when I am trusted." There is no training which girls so much need as that which develops a sense of honor and loyalty to each other, and games will do more to really make these living qualities than the ethical systems taught in a college

curriculum. It takes the finest kind of courage to be fair, to be honest, and to be loyal, and these are absolutely essential in good team work.

We may think that little vanities and jealousies, and little unkind words or somewhat exaggerated statements have little harm in themselves; that bragging and snobbishness are perhaps pardonable under some conditions. Games try out these qualities and they appear in their exact proportion and in all their ugliness, devoid of the graces in which they are so often half hidden. A game is a well-nigh perfect democracy. Nothing is so good for the girl as to find that money, clothes, family, prestige, or "pull" are as nothing,—that they do not help her to play good ball or make a team. She stands or falls absolutely by what she is and can do, and realizes that the game makes all equal, and that she may have to shake hands with a despised social rival on the field.

Especially for women it seems to me that games have some especial advantages. Some women are abnormally sensitive and introspective or morbid, and live too much on the subjective side of life. The various ethical and religious cults which appeal primarily to the subjective self appeal largely to women. Sports are primarily objective, they afford no opportunity for analysis of feeling or consciousness of the process. The thought is upon the things to be done and not upon the doer. Every woman's club which makes it possible to have games is erecting a barrier against nervousness, morbidity, and too much introspection.

The qualities which games develop are not essentially masculine, they are but human qualities needed for human fellowship, and I have yet to see a group of girls made masculine by holding these ideals before them, and where the spirit of the training is that which I have been trying to portray. I do not mean to say, of course, that every individual trait can be strengthened, every defect removed by game work, or that games alone can do this; but I do mean to say that organized sports for women, when put on a proper basis and under intelligent directors, will go a longer way toward training the faculties and moral instincts than many of the courses of instruction which are now given the credit for doing this.

The development of these individual and social qualities depends not so much upon the game played as upon the teachers who train. Physical training has not yet been ranked where it belongs, and it is the tendency, especially among high schools, to think any one can teach "physical culture," as they call it, and it is still made an adjunct to the regular instruction in English or history or some other subject given by the teacher. Such results as I have outlined can be achieved only when the instructors know these ideals, believe in them, and live them. Many of the teachers themselves have but little better idea of what this involves. It is no uncommon thing for universities to receive requests like this from students who have had no game work

or who did poor work in gymnastics: "I have a good position offered to teach history and English in — high school, but have to teach physical culture also. Can you send me some good books on gymnastics and games, or make suggestions?" Some of the teachers who are acting as coaches came to one of the summer schools last year and did not know games had an ethical value; and there are women in charge of our young girls in basketball who have never played an organized game! What are the requirements for people who are to teach them? Assume that we agree that their duties are to develop the players individually along the lines suggested, to inspire them with the right spirit and to teach an accurate, clean game. To do this, the instructor of these sports must, in my judgment, be thus qualified: some knowledge of physiology, anatomy, psychology, and dietetics. She must love games in themselves, or in other words, have a true play-spirit. She must know her subject absolutely and unqualifiedly, and to do this she must have played under the rules, been disciplined, and be able to do that which she teaches. She must be able to *interpret* and *classify* rules, as well as to teach them (two-thirds of the athletics taught girls are inaccurately and unsystematically presented). She must possess courage, decision, fairness, and a sense of humor. She must have the gifts of interesting and managing people, of compelling respect, and must be able to inspire. She must have confidence in herself and her players, and be able to be friendly and sympathetic without being familiar. There are other desirable qualities which she should possess, but how many of the women who are instructing girls have a small percentage of these? Until they have, no fair test of games can be made from the ethical standpoint.

The social value of this training has already been indicated, in that they enable women to function more successfully in society. Every individual lives in a community more or less complex. The field of activity may be the home, it may be the shop, it may be a profession, or it may be a round of pleasure. And what happens when the girl who has had the benefit of organized game work goes into any one of these spheres? The development of these qualities not only makes her efficient, but it sets up a habit or a tendency, and when similar demands are made, the individual responds along the line of least resistance. The girl who shirked responsibility on the field does it in her home or in her occupation; the girl who gave up basketball because she could not get more than her share of praise, will still be found baiting for this indispensable necessity. The responsible, reliable player makes the same kind of a citizen. The girl who was unfair and intemperate in her games carries these same qualities over into her social or business world, and every one who lives with her or works with her is influenced by them. One of the greatest drawbacks to the work of women's organizations to-day is that they do not know what team work is. One of the great difficulties

in the homes is that women have not learned the power to adjust themselves quickly, or to know what are essential things and what are trifles. Many a community interest is sacrificed for lack of loyalty and because women so much earlier than men lose the play spirit and its inspiration. And if it is true that sports give a training of value to the community, we should urge playgrounds, public playhouses, and public gymnasia where women and girls may go for this training; and we should urge that public schools make as good provision for girls as for boys. We are facing many conditions in the home in which the community is interested. One of them is to stem the tide which is separating mother and children and interposing nurses. The absence of the play spirit, and in many instances the absolute inability to play, bears an important relation to this. The gaming spirit is growing among women, one evidence being the extent to which they play for prizes. This is the competitive spirit without the play spirit or joy or exhilaration of games. Many housewives make no provision whatever for recreation for their employees, and hold that work is not only exercise, but gives them the needed recreation. These are but illustrations of many conditions and beliefs among women, which show the great need of teaching them sports, which emphasize the ethical and moral values.

HEALTH—BEAUTY—POWER.

BY

DR. MARA L. PRATT-CHADWICK.

"To be strong is to be happy."—*Longfellow.*

EVERY young woman has a right to the inherent desire within her heart to be beautiful. To be beautiful, however, we must have health; and when one has beauty and health, one has power—the power to radiate and to attract; the power to do and to be—and that is life in all its richness and fulness.

And how shall this be acquired? Artificially some might say; but—among people of reasonable refinement the artificial beautifying—the laced-in waist line, the powder and paint, the rank perfumes, and the oily pomade, are relegated to the past. One still sees these artificial products among uncultured people—the uneducated, the shoddy, and often among the new rich. We shall assume, however, that we are none of these, but rather that we recognize that no carmine can take the place of rich blood's own flush; that no true grace of form comes except through ease and freedom; that no jewels can compare with clean, regular, white teeth and finely kept nails, no oil compensate for neglect of cleanliness of the scalp and the vitality of well brushed hair.