

GEORGE BEAHON

"In This Corner"



Lee Trevino was holding still for the press, radio and TV people the day he won the Pro Athlete of The Year Award in Rochester. One of the chipmunk newsmen threw the dart.

"Lee, do you consider golfers athletes?"

The Merry Mex fielded the question pretty well.

"Okay," he said, "it's not a contact sport. But if I pull a muscle walking up the 70th hole of the Open, I can't holler over to the bench and ask the coach to send in a sub. And if I don't show up, I don't get paid 50 Gs on a no-cut contract, sitting out a whole season. And I gamble my own money. It's my money put up there to enter, and I got to win or I don't get the bread." End Trevino's defense.

Don't get me wrong. I dig golf. One of that breed who'll close a saloon in the wee hours, and tee it up at 8 a.m. Some of my best friends are golfers. But not athletes.

Aside from the touring pros and intercollegiate and national amateur levels, golf does't cut it as a sport. If it is, I am an athlete. And Jackie Gleason is a girl jockey.

Golf is tailored to the upper income levels. The people who put golf on the tube will tell you it's supported by the more affluent, influential leaders in business and communities. This has been confirmed by a survey of the highest ranking executives in America's 500 leading corporations: 78 per cent play a few times, at least, every year; 90 per cent watch TV golf. (And check the high priced merchandise that's advertised on the Masters shows. Where else do you learn about the new Cadillacs?)

High school athletes who are free in the summertime never get to lay a 5-iron on a golf ball. There is precious little organized help for them. Nor enough courses, even now. It's too expensive for most. Count the number of recreation programs for youth that include golf.

I do not wish to start World War III, but who can say golf is a sport? Who says it appeals to more than 5 per cent of the world under 25 years old?

Even at its highest art form—the Masters — compare it with the major sports. I looked up one day last April and saw Sam Snead, approaching 60 years of age, and also approaching the opening day lead with a score of 69

An old baseball manager, Burt Shotton, once analyzed it this way: "When a guy 50 can beat a guy 25, it ain't no game."

Or how about Bob Hope's description? "It's a game for guys too old for girls, but who still don't mind traps."

How about those TV orators who describe the courage of the pro getting paid in six figures for making four-foot putts? Did you ever see a golfer take a skull fracture?

Or even a bloody nose? I mean before the fight starts in the clubhouse bar?

If they make the handicap right, I can knock it around with Trevino and Nicklaus. That makes me an athlete? In the electric go-cart, with the cigars and the Scotch sours? How would they go about handicapping the sport so I could pitch against Mickey Lolich? Or backpedal with Joe Namath? Or go into the boards with Bobby Orr? Or block a Wilt Chamberlain stuffer? No way conceivable.

Golf is a form of exercise. Bring the club back 70 or 100 times. Putt about 36 times. That's about as fatiguing as fly-swatting. Your 5-year-old kid could putt all day without needing a nap. You get more rest between shots than the last man on the dugout bench.

What golf is, is a form of exercise. It is, someone once pronounced, a method of lousing up a nice long walk.

It makes widows and liars and feuds and burglars. Still I know guys who play in the mud and rain and sleet and near-hurricane winds with ear muffs and aspirin and hand warmers and booze in the side pocket on days they wouldn't walk a city block to buy ice cream for the kids.

Far be it from me to knock it. As an exercise, that is. Remember the old cartoon?

Four guys are putting on the 18th green. In the background, this enormous, black mushroom cloud represents the Last Great Bomb Drop. It is countdown for civilization.

"Hurry up and putt," says one golfer. "We got only 10 seconds before the shock wave hits."

JOHN DOSER

Scholastic Notebook



So there's small Honeoye Falls-Lima, a Class A school dropping down to Class B next year, trying to get out from among the Monroe County big boys like Rush-Henrietta, Fairport, Brighton, etc., in Monroe County league sports activity.

"It's like knocking your head against a stone wall," HF-L athletic director Charlie Meisenzahl says, referring to the whopping scores the big guys usually pile up against his game but out-classed Cougars.

Then over in the City-Catholic League, as Rochester overturns its reorganization of two years ago to justify last November's election of the present school board Charlotte and Monroe re-join the league as "junior" members and along with Jefferson

and Marshall will form the small schools division which with the large schools division and the Catholic division will make up the C-C circuit beginning this fall.

The time to talk about a metro league encompassing all public

and parochial schools in Monroe County has never been riper than right now.

Now both "major" leagues of high schools in Monroe County, the City-Catholic League and the Monroe County League, are toying with new divisions, new schools (Webster No. 2, Pittsford No. 2) and new schedules.

It doesn't make sense to saddle a Honeoye Falls-Lima with powerhouses like Rush-Henrietta while the Cougars would be more at home with a Charlotte or Jeff in a small schools division.

But doesn't it make a lot of sense to put Rush-Henrietta up against Madison, Aquinas, Franklin, East Rochester, Pittsford etc., etc., in a large school's division?

'Breakfast of Champions'

Held at St. Theodore's

The Men's Club of St. Theodore's Church, Gates, had their Annual "Breakfast of Champions" recently. The champions this year were two young men of the parish.

Toastmaster Ralph Esposito and Father Gerald Dunn, pastor of the parish, presented the club's annual sports achievement awards to Scott Delgatti of Cardinal Mooney High School

for excellence in baseball, and to Greg Rath of Gates-Chili High School for excellence in basketball.

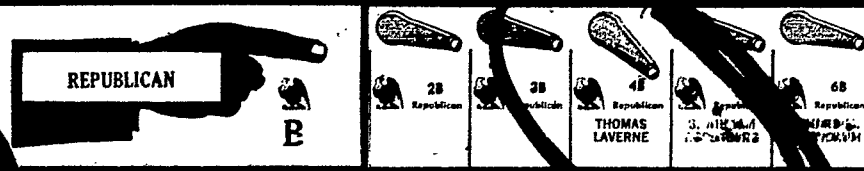
Carl Steinfeldt, Rochester Red Wing general manager, and Charles Schiano, Rochester Lancer general manager, were the guest speakers. They praised the young men for their achievements in sports.

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