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Professionalism vs. Amateurism

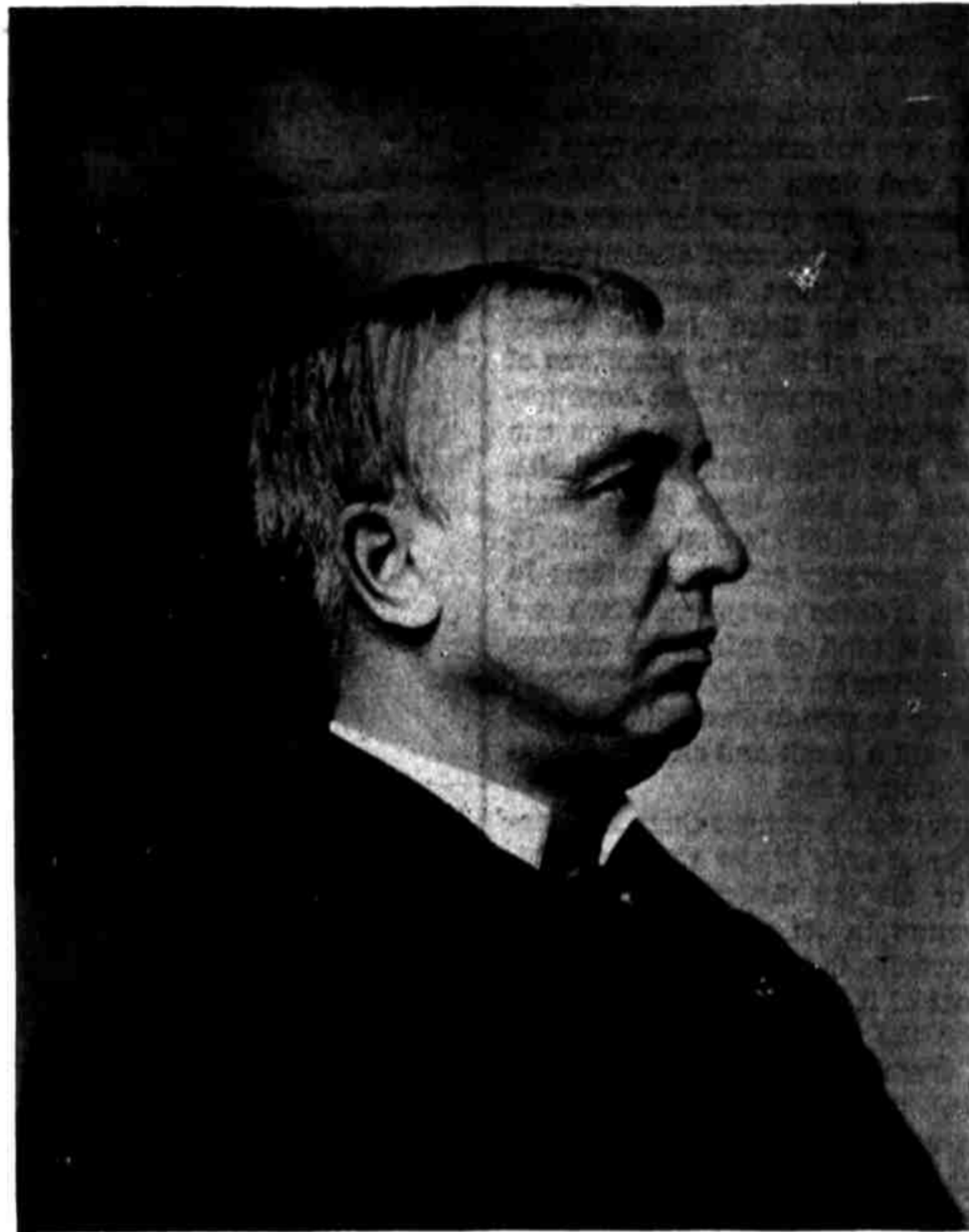
By CHANCELLOR E. BENJAMIN ANDREWS

Needed Reforms in College Athletics

To effect reform in college athletics, to enact rules that can be enforced, we need a rational notion of "amateur" and of "professional," instead of importing our definitions from Oxford and Cambridge. The criterion on which to lay stress should be actual, bona fide studentship. I do not for my part see why a young man of character and scholarship, sincerely a collegian, as truly so as any of his classmates, with no thought whatever of gameplaying as a profession or as a permanent source of revenue, should be stigmatized as a "professional," a "non-amateur," and kept off college teams, simply because, now and then, in a summer vacation, being obliged to get money in order to prosecute his studies, he has, instead of pitching hay, pitched ball and received a few dollars for doing so. American college athleticism will at this point do well not to ape that of British universities. What we desire in our college athletes is sincerity, scholarship, manhood, college spirit, neither philistinism on the one hand, nor pharisaism on the other—purity versus purism or puritanism; Americanism, democracy, as against aristocracy. Let no self-supporting student be excluded from any college team because he has to work with his hands that he may the better work with his head.

In other walks of life the mere receipt of money for a given sort of function does not make a man a professional. A jolly resin-the-bow, for instance, who gets a dollar now and then for fiddling at a country dance is not a violinist de metier. A lay preacher officiating at a funeral and receiving a douceur to attest the pleasure of the heirs is not thereby ordained. Many college presidents, it is to be hoped, at times touch banknotes in return for addresses by them delivered; but they are rarely referred to as professional speakers, like Gough and George William Curtis; and if one of them should be so denominated, something other than the money would be needed to explain the choice of a title. The same in regard to writing for the press, reporting, literary work in general. Not the fee makes the professional, but the dominant purpose, with some reference also, no doubt, to the man's aptness or ability for the art which he affects.

Every college in the land has students of a musical turn who, both at home and while in attendance at college, sing or play in churches on Sunday and receive money for their services. Yet we never think of excluding such collegians from college glee clubs, choral societies or bands. Being genuine students, they have the right to represent their colleges in all musical associations and performances. Why not treat athletes by this same rule?



A man may actually be a professional in some game and yet never have taken money for playing it. He may possess the spirit of sport without the spirit of studentship. He ought not to be eligible, but is so under the rules now usually prevailing. An athlete may also be the poorest sort of a student, a mere hanger-on by grace, yet, if he has never happened to receive remuneration he is eligible.

President Faunce of Brown university justly denounces the systematic prevarication which has prevailed and still prevails in college sport. Harvard university deserves great praise for its summary dealing with a case of this kind recently. Nearly two months before the end of his senior year, Clarkson, the famous pitcher, had, according to the papers, signed a contract with the New York Americans, accepting \$500 of his salary in advance. Yet he continued to play with the Harvard team until his fraud was brought to light.

I believe that naught else has done so much to debase consciences in this fashion, inducing clandestinism, the illicit receiving of aid by players, and general philistinism within the college, as telling bona fide college students wishing to play the game that they cannot do this in college if they play for money outside. The unreason of the restriction is so clear that players feel encouraged to defy it. Young men will play in summer, taking wages in fact, though no longer in name, or else taking wages indirectly, as, titulary, drug store tapsters of summer drinks, as colporteurs of temperance tracts, or as agents of

Bible societies.

Under enforced purism, also, the level of play would sink. A boy who has played well enough to have been sought after as an athlete will certainly play much better in college than one less interested. An amateur of wealth and leisure would not be likely to match him.

It is desirable, and not the reverse, to keep up some parity of excellence between college athletics and athletics in general. To let amateur play become markedly inferior would be to render it ridiculous and greatly to lessen its present power for good.

Ceasing to fume over summer play, which is no test whatever of scholastic character, we shall have better success in securing obedience to those criteria which do relate to genuineness of studentship, the great question at issue.

1. Let no man represent any college in any match until he has been in that college a year, falling in no study and gaining at least 60 per cent general average standing.

2. Promptly disqualify, whether in training or mid season, any candidate or contestant who for a month falls below the general average named, or is guilty of any immorality, breach of training, or impropriety in play.

3. Require of every team member his written statement upon honor, detailing his revenue and means of support; money from home, wages and for what gifts and from whom, etc., with the understanding that aught of misrepresentation in the account will, being discovered, permanently blacklist the man throughout the association and the country.

As to Brutality of the Game

The arguments for and against football have been so thoroughly discussed that it is quite needless to consider the general matter further; but a word upon the tendency to exaggerate the injuries received by players may not be amiss; though, it is pleasing to observe, the public more and more sees the real state of the case, and frenzied criticisms are much less common than formerly.

Even if the game were as disastrous as the most violent denunciations represent, this would go little toward offsetting the good it does.

In a sport like football, which confessedly is strenuous and physically exacting, the spectator is conscious mainly of the physical struggle before him and does not realize the training contestants have received to render this innocuous. He carries away a vivid impression of bruises, sprains, rubbing, arnica, court plaster, etc. He does not stop to consider that the court plaster in the average case covers a mere scratch. Exaggeration and outcries against "brutality" are the natural result.

Whether the illusion will ever be fully appreciated is a question, but the fact remains that notwithstanding the inflammatory accounts of its ferocity, there had been up to last year, according to statistics by Professor Dexter of the University of Illinois, only three deaths and eight permanent injuries in a total of 22,766 college players the preceding ten years.

A Tribute To The Scrubs.

(By a Staff Member.)

It has come to be realized, at Nebraska, at least, that a good second eleven is essential to the success of the Varsity team. In years past it has been a most formidable task for the coaches to bring out enough material at daily practice to provide an even respectable opposition to the charges of the first eleven, and it is indeed a tribute to the prowess of Coach Booth that in spite of this fact Nebraska has risen to the position she now holds in Western football. But things have been different this year.

Although the season has been marked by the lack of extraordinary material for Varsity substitutions, yet, for good consistent, persistent workers this year's "Scrubs" have broken the record. At no time has the first team had an easy thing against the second, and the writer of this article firmly believes that the "Scrubs" have been largely responsible for this year's successes, and have not been to blame for its defeats. Here's to the "Scrubs."

J. F. S.