Day, D. (2017). **The British Athlete "is born not made" Transatlantic Tensions over Sports Coaching.** *Journal of Sport History*, 44(1), 20-34.

During the latter stages of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the trajectory of organized sports followed significantly different paths in North America and Great Britain. Nowhere was this more evident that in the field of professional coaching where the American model of full-time coaches in the universities and athletics clubs contrasted with the ever-increasing preference for amateur coaches in many British sports. While the American model was adopted enthusiastically in many European countries, there was considerable resistance to this approach in Britain. This paper utilizes contemporary media commentary to contrast the characteristics of coaching practice and philosophy that typified American and British approaches during the Victorian period and explores some of the arguments offered in Britain against the adoption of specialized American coaching methods.

KEYWORDS: COACHING; AMERICA; BRITAIN; PROFESSIONAL.

On August 17, 1858, Queen Victoria and President Buchanan exchanged a Morse code message, "Europe and America are united by telegraph", implying a degree of Atlantic harmony. The subsequent half century, however, witnessed a transformation of the USA through industrialization, knowledge explosion, population growth, urbanization, and geographical expansion, leading to apprehension in Britain over "Americanization", as epitomised by the impact of a increasing range of American popular cultural exports. After a trans-continental railroad was built in 1869, American mass culture was incorporated into a range of powerful culture industries whose products, such as vaudeville, circuses, dime novels, department stores, postcards, comics, and Tin Pan Alley music, emerged as crucial tools in the implementation of hegemonic American social values at home and abroad. When Buffalo Bill took his show to England in 1886, and then to Europe in 1889, its enormous scale, its touring methods, and its public relations strategy, showcased not only a product of the American culture industry, but the sheer power of the industry itself. European critics Weber, Gorky, and Huizinga feared these displays foreshadowed a future of cultural impoverishment for Europe, while Matthew Arnold, reflecting wider British concerns about diminishing economic and political influence and the declining status of its Empire, deplored their corrupting impact on British culture.[1]

As a cultural and social product, sport was not immune from these debates. During the nineteenth century, the trajectory of organized sports followed significantly different paths in America and Britain resulting in a diametrically opposed approach to elite sport and to sports coaching. In America, a widespread commitment to athletic success led to coaching becoming a specialized profession that employed the principles of scientific management to control elite athletes, a coaching model that contrasted sharply with the laissez faire approach taken by British amateurs. This paper explores the characteristics of coaching practice and philosophy that typified these disparate approaches in the latter stages of the Victorian period and outlines some of the British objections to American coaching methods. The sources utilized reflect British attitudes to coaching since criticisms emerged in both local and national media rather than in organizational records, emphasizing that the amateur administrators of emerging governing bodies of sport generally considered professional coaching to be a somewhat suspicious and peripheral activity and regarded the professional coach as a servant unworthy of serious consideration.[2]

Cultural differences in coaching practice

In common with their British counterparts, the American Inter-collegiate Association defined an amateur in 1906 as one who had never "taught, pursued, or assisted at athletic exercises for money, or for any valuable consideration", but any impression of a shared vision of the pernicious effect of professional coaching is illusionary.[3] At the end of the nineteenth century, British athletics administrator Montague Shearman observed that American amateurs were prepared in training quarters by a skilled trainer, and remained completely under his orders, while the British amateur followed "his own sweet will" in training himself.[4] His eschewing of the American system of allowing the coach complete control was reflected in British criticisms of professional American rowing coaches who exercised total discipline over their crews. This was a serious issue for those suspicious of a system that allowed a professional, "to whom the impulse is to take advantage of everything", to impose tactics which stretched the rules of sport.[5] As Caspar Whitney argued in *Outing*, an American publication that tended to adhere to a conservative view of amateurism, a professional

coach was hired to produce a winning team and, since his position depended on his success, it was inevitable that he would be unconcerned with ethics.[6] In America, such coaches were valued and the adjective “professional” was equated to those who were not only paid for coaching, but also did it effectively.[7] While this perspective was reflected in isolated British media reports, which began to distinguish between the virtue of amateurism and the fault of amateurishness, British commentators were generally critical of professionalized sport directed by specialized trainers in order to win international victories and their criticism became more strident as sport increasingly became a vehicle for the expression of national virtue.[8]

Reflecting on a Belgian success in the 1906 Grand Challenge Cup at Henley, the *Daily Mail* observed that this first ever victory by a foreign boat in the “Blue Riband of the rowing world” was further evidence that Britain’s “vaunted supremacy” in sport was being superseded. The nation was now no better than the Australians were at cricket or New Zealanders at rugby, while the Intercalated Olympics in Athens had demonstrated American and Canadian superiority in track and field athletics. Even in swimming, a “purely British sport”, national representatives were finding it difficult to beat foreign competitors.[9] *The Times* later noted that international defeats had fueled concerns over physical degeneracy and that the performances of New Zealand and South African rugby teams, Belgian oarsmen, Australian Davis Cup players and the Canadian lacrosse team, combined with the dominance of American athletes, had “caused these outcries to become a continuous ululation.”[10] In the 1908 London Olympics, Britons “learnt that in speed and strength we are far behind the Americans” and the belief that the nation’s athletes were “endowed with greater powers of endurance” had been disproved since British distance runners had been outclassed by Americans and others “whose devotion to athletic sports” was more recent. International defeats led British commentators to become defensive about a perceived decline in national superiority and this was reflected in Anglo-American confrontations throughout the 1908 Games, following which the *Academy* hoped never to see American athletes in Britain again.[11]

This anti-American rhetoric was not a new phenomenon and merely reinforced the diametrically opposite positions already held by transatlantic rivals, at least outwardly, on the values of sport and, of particular relevance here, on the subject of competitive preparation. In both countries distinctions always existed between “gentleman amateurs and amateurs plain and simple” with English oarsmen competing in America in 1872 being described as good a crew "as the most hypercritical of amateur oarsmen could desire and if they are beaten we must concede the superiority of American rowing over ours so far as the gentlemanly element is concerned".[12] Ten years later, however, *The Times* was noting that the status of American amateurs appeared to be very different to that of English amateurs,[13] reflecting British concerns that the rise of rationalized and systematic training processes in America appeared to have stretched the boundaries of the amateur ethos. The American approach had caused disquiet in British rowing circles from as early as the 1869 Harvard-Oxford race, which had generated British criticism of the intensity of American training methods, and when Cornell University competed at Henley in 1895 their professional coach, Charles Courtney, was criticized for isolating his crew and holding secretive training sessions.[14] For Courtney this was standard practice. As the *London Daily News* pointed out, Yale and Harvard refused to allow anyone to observe their training sessions while simultaneously creating an “elaborate spy brigade” to “note the doings of the enemy”, an objectionable practice that seemed “to destroy all the benefit that may be gained by athletics.”[15]

The Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) was equally suspicious of the American approach and this was reinforced in September 1895 when athletes representing London Athletic Club (LAC) were whitewashed 11-0 by those of the New York Athletic Club (NYAC), who had been supervised by professional trainer Mike Murphy.[16] The clubs had agreed on having two representatives in each event but that only first places should be counted. Events included the 100 and 200 yards, both won by the American Wefers in world records, the 120 hurdles, the quarter mile and half mile, won by American Kilpatrick in a world record, the mile and three miles, the high and long jumps, and the throwing events. In the shot, J. Watson, representing Cambridge and London, apparently did not

understand the "first rudiments" of the event while G.S. Robertson of Oxford University and London had failed to learn the American rules concerning hammer throwing and behaved as if he did not want to be there. *Outing* observed that the NYAC had dominated "in speed and strength and skill and endurance" and concluded that the "word defeat but faintly describes the catastrophe."[17]

Shearman conceded that, given the "magnificent state of training in which these men were brought to the post", the American club would have easily beaten any team that Britain could have produced but he expressed a number of concerns that encapsulated amateur objections to what they perceived as professionalized sport. Observing that Britain had more amateur athletes and that there were few differences in physique, he concluded that the Americans achieved their "superlative results" through the application of a well-organized athletic system. Clubs maintained selected representatives entirely at the club's expense and provided them with well-paid and competent coaches who took a scientific approach to competitive preparation.[18] NYAC, for example, had about 2,000 members, plus "athletic members", enlisted under a rule that allowed the board to elect any amateur athlete who would be a "desirable addition to the club." Owing to the intensity of club rivalry, governors recruited promising athletes, who paid no entrance fee and only a small subscription, and then supported them in training for championships or representative matches. A club of hundreds of members thereby subsidized, at considerable expense, a small band of elite performers, resulting in them developing "abnormal speed and endurance." Because the British amateur lived at home and had only an hour or two of exercise in the evening, the American athlete had a significant advantage.[19]

The same training opportunities presented themselves at the American universities where all sports were managed by one committee and "gate money" from football matches was used to create athletic endowments. While an Oxbridge student would be described as getting his "blue", in America he "secured his seat at the training table." Just as at Oxford or Cambridge a student could obtain an exhibition in classics or mathematics that went towards paying his expenses, in an American college a man's athletic ability could secure the payment of his "battels" (an Oxford

University term for an account for food and accommodation expenses). Shearman conceded that the men who received the benefits of the training table were generally men of good social position and he did not blame them individually for accepting the benefits of a system that he criticized as "radically vicious, and more likely to kill than to foster the genuine spirit of sport."[20]

The Training Table

The use of the training table, which provided selected athletes with quality food on a daily basis separated from other students or club members, became a focus for disagreement between American and British commentators, who believed that much of this board was being provided free of charge. Shearman hoped that it would never be introduced into Britain and argued that the Americans should abolish the practice, a view that drew widespread British support following the whitewash of the LAC team as critics focused their attention on what they considered unfair and professional athletic practices.[21]

British objections to the training table were not because of any differences in approaches to athletic diets since training advice on diets had shifted significantly in both countries, mainly under pressure from amateur sportsmen who believed that gentlemen needed different training regimes from those of professionals.[22] The essential difference between British and American nutritional arrangements lay in the way in which these were structurally arranged with American clubs and colleges using the training table concept not only to control athletes' diets but also to engender team spirit and the dissemination of athletic wisdom.[23] In one typical club example, the Manhattan Athletic Club established a training table in 1892 for the benefit of its competitive athletes and riders.[24] As for the universities, the 1891 Harvard crew had breakfast at their training table every morning, lunch was eaten at the table between twelve and one, while dinner was served when they came off the river in the evening.[25] A year later, Corbin described the training table diet of Harvard track and field athletes as being abundant, of the best quality and well cooked. The rowing training table began in March and for the next four months the crew were ordered never to eat or drink anything except at the scheduled times.[26] At Yale, dinner was served at the football training-table at

half-past six, with the captain at the head of the table and the doctor or trainer at the foot, while nine track and field athletes were "taken to the table" in April 1894, although it was anticipated that thirty-five athletes would be involved by May.[27] That same year, seventy-three candidates for the Brown athletic team went into training, working out between half-past ten and noon and between two and six in the afternoon, and the team was sent to the training table about a month before the championship games. Recent "athletic exhibitions" had placed the team on an excellent financial basis and every effort was being made to make the forthcoming season the most successful yet.[28]

This reference to the income generated by university athletes was an important feature of the debate that surrounded the issue of subsistence and board. The Yale Track Athletic Association report for 1892 showed that its expenditure, resulting from sending teams to Harvard, Princeton and New York, the costs of the training table, rebuilding the track, and providing suits, shoes and so on came to $4723.46. Salaries were $750, resulting in a total of $5475.46. Receipts came from subscriptions of $1900, income from games of $589.93 and training table board of $153.25 with the shortfall being met by a grant of $2832.28 from the financial union.[29] This level of subsidy was an anathema to those British amateur sportsmen who believed that money fundamentally changed the nature of sport and developed specialists rather encouraging all-round athletes.[30]

British criticism

The *Morning Post* observed in 1895 that Shearman's sentiments concerning the training table would be endorsed by British sportsmen and hoped that Americans would see the wisdom of his remarks, although it concluded that their system had probably become too entrenched to be reformed. Published balance sheets showing the expenditure on the production of amateur athletes revealed that one university had spent £5,000 in a single year and the paper suggested that this kind of financial support led to the decay of amateur sport.[31] Responding to similar criticisms later that year, one *Pall Mall Gazette* commentator having referred to the "rotten amateur system of America", a Harvard correspondent to the *Field* denied that a professional runner or oarsman could enroll at any university, have free food at the training table and do nothing but practice athletics and represent

the college. At Harvard, for example, a student athlete could not compete unless he had achieved the required grade average. He also objected to the "ungrounded statement" that the training table was free since the universal rule was that each man paid at the training table exactly what he had paid before he was selected.[32] He clearly failed to convince one writer in the *Manchester Guardian* who argued that, while administrators in England insisted "upon purity as far as we can secure it", in America, there were "mysterious 'training tables', which enable athletes to train and live in luxury at the expense of the clubs."[33]

Commenting in 1901 on an article by Walter Camp in the *Century*, which argued that the training table was beneficial to college athletes, the *Northants Evening Telegraph* observed that it was not "an unmixed good." On the positive side, the training table was certainly an incentive to men aiming to achieve athletic distinction, not only because they were guaranteed quality food but also because they benefitted from mixing with older athletes and absorbing their advice as well as profiting by regular contact with the coaches. On the other hand, the attractions of the training table led to many men trying out for teams, especially those working their way through college or those who could not afford a decent diet.[34] In one typical example, American playwright Rex Beach, who came from a poor background, invented himself as a football player to get access to the training table, even though he had never previously experienced the game. He played for a whole season and, although he suffered sprains and compound fractures, he "stuck to that training table."[35] For the British observer, the misuse of the training table started as soon as men were taken at little or no cost, the period of time during which the training table was continued became inordinately long, or the number of athletes was increased unnecessarily. In these instances, the charge of hiring athletes could be levied against clubs and universities for providing support for a man in return for which he gave his athletic services, a practice that misinterpreted the "real nature of honest amateur" sport and led to the violation of the ethics of sport.[36]

Shearman acknowledged that the American system was openly practiced and accepted as being consistent with amateurism but he also noted that some American commentators were

uncomfortable with how the training table practice sat alongside amateur principles.[37] Writing in July 1895, Eugene Richards highlighted two “evils”, the offering of scholarships or other inducements to well-known athletes to go to a particular university to strengthen its athletic team, and the provision of “board.” The principle that when a man was taken to a training table the athletic organization would pay the price of his board over and above what he paid beforehand had previously worked well and, when the organizations were poor, the bills had been collected. However, the major college games now brought in so much more money that some “dishonorable men” had, at the last moment and in their final year, refused to pay their bills, “claiming that amount as their due for work done”, thus putting themselves on a level with professionals. Richards proposed requiring a bond for payment of board from every man as a prerequisite to his being admitted to the training table, a practice already operating at Harvard and one that was being considered by the student committee which regulated the expenses of sports at Yale.[38] Such administrative practices were not universally popular however. At Kansas University in 1904, several football players objected to being asked to pay their training table bills weekly in advance after it was discovered that several board bills of the previous year had remained unpaid. Even though the amount involved was only two dollars per week per player, it was argued that, “they ought to have their board given them, because they had done so much work for the university.”[39]

American administrators did make a determined effort to deal with issues that appeared to them to stretch the amateur boundaries. A resolution passed by the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) in November 1895 proposed the abolition of training tables along with the payment of exorbitant training and travelling expenses. An athlete with no visible means of support could not be considered an amateur and the AAU board dealt with the amateur standing of some of the NYAC competitors who had faced LAC.[40] In Britain, the *Morning Post* was pleased that the AAU had thus endorsed most of the sentiments of the British Press concerning the amateur standing of members of the NYAC team and noted with satisfaction that two NYAC representatives, Weaver and Hickok, had since been deprived of their amateur status. The paper, somewhat smugly, and almost certainly

erroneously, concluded that it was "decidedly pleasant to find that the tactics displayed by the NYAC did not meet with the general approval of American athletes." The writer was also positive about the abolition of training tables (described as "free meals for those in training") and the attempt to keep training and travelling expenses within limits. However, he doubted that the AAU would be able to enforce their ruling and noted that they were not held in the same high respect as the AAA.[41] As it turned out, his fears were justified and in 1907, James E. Sullivan, then president of the AAU, was still condemning the "training table which can very easily be abused and is sometimes maintained at the expense of amateurism."[42]

British criticisms of the training table were intertwined with more generic criticisms of the entire American system of coaching and competitive preparation. Following the 1900 AAA Championships, in which American competitors won eight of the thirteen championships, the *Manchester Guardian* critiqued their systematic training methods and pointed out that, in contrast to his American counterpart, a young Englishman wanting to be a university athlete, "has a track and the services of a general trainer but it is almost entirely a matter for himself."[43] The *Morning Post* rejected suggestions that these American victories were due to any physical or psychological superiority. Instead, they were the result of a scientific system of supervised practice and the provision of free board, which represented an "abolition" of the English distinction between amateurs and professionals and equated to the application of a scholarship system for the improvement of athletics. Somewhat misleadingly, the writer stated that the institution of the training table implied so much more than the "fraternal consumption of frugal meals as fall to the lot of the Oxford or Cambridge athlete." The promising young American athlete who won his seat at the "training-table" need not pay for his board and lodging and, at most universities, the desire for intellectual distinction was not allowed to interfere with the more serious business of physical training. The intellectually gifted cricket blue or university oarsman were types of athlete peculiar to Britain and, while they often went on to achieve distinguished public positions, the elite American athlete was seldom heard of in later years.[44]

The newspaper went on to argue that many American athletes merely wanted to become salaried trainers and coaches, men who were accorded a social position and income equivalent to that of a college professor. Because these professionals were able to devote all their time and energies to a study of the "human racing-machine and its imperfections", they were always going to be more successful than British amateur coaches were in identifying and developing talent. They caught their men at a young age and worked hard at developing new training ideas and athletic techniques to the extent that while "the English athlete is born not made, the athlete from the United States is born and made." If scientific training was impossible without adopting the American approach, then it was better to be content to lose like a gentleman.[45] The *Observer* agreed, noting that British amateurs trained mainly "by the help chiefly of the light of nature" in contrast to American amateurs who were trained even more strictly than British professionals. As a result, while "we train under the English amateur system and the Americans train under an efficient professional trainer, they will continue to beat us." The writer declared that American trainers were "more autocratic than the German Emperor" and that the admiration accorded some of these coaches was "ludicrous." This led to teams being referred to as "Mr. So-and-so's men" and, to British ears, there was a "certain lack of dignity in this manner of appellation."[46] Three years later a *Daily Mail* correspondent declared that, in their "human training stables", the American trainer was considered more important than the athletes and that men like Murphy assumed total control treating men just as a horse trainer treated a horse. Athletes were put up at a sort of hydropathic establishment, a modern training stable, and drilled by a "scientific process and professional bullying into the greatest excellence" of which they were capable. If Britons imitated these methods then performances might improve but this would also turn sport from a pleasure into a pain.[47]

A very British approach

Superficially, at least, these criticisms were reflected in the differing approaches taken to sport by men at the leading universities in each country. Caspar Whitney said of Oxbridge that "the men don't seem to care whether they win or not" in contrast to the Americans, whose instinct in both

sport and business was “to rest nowhere short of first place.”[48] While he was incorrect in assuming that all British elite sportsmen were unconcerned about winning, differences in sporting philosophy did create problems and Oxford and Cambridge only proposed a joint contest with Harvard and Yale in London in July 1900 after Oxford had withdrawn objections to their opponents’ amateur status.[49] Tensions often surrounded the extent of preparation that athletes engaged in. During the Oxbridge tour to America in 1901, W.E.B. Henderson noted the thoroughness of the American training and that the hosts “were surprised at what they considered our lack of method.”[50]

As scholars have pointed out, this British reluctance to engage with serious training and coaching was intimately connected to amateur values such as moderation and to concerns about specialization.[51] The question of specialization was addressed by *The Times* in 1907, which observed that the British elite sportsman liked to play several games well rather than to devote all his time and energy to becoming the “virtuoso of a single pastime.” This resulted in the development of a well-balanced all-round physique and endowed him with the valuable attribute of physical adaptability. The number of double or even triple “blues” was proof that the benefits of diversity were well appreciated at the British universities while very few college athletes in America played two or more games and those who won a seat at the training table (described as the equivalent of holding a scholarship for athletics) were almost invariably specialists. Only occasionally was an athlete allowed to combine two activities and even then the professional trainer would rather he confined himself to a single pursuit.[52]

Not for the first time, this criticism conveniently ignored the fact that British amateurs, especially at elite levels, were becoming far more specialized than contemporaries were prepared to admit. The rhetoric of amateurism was never matched by its practical application and, even within the professional middle class, not everyone applied amateur values with equal rigor. The realities of playing elite sport were reflected in criticisms of the intensity of preparation adopted by oarsmen, both at the clubs and in the universities. Ralph Paine noted in 1902 that British rowers did not like to be beaten, despite their protestations of “sport for sport’s sake”, and he pointed out that the

amateur sculler in Britain generally hired a coach,[53] despite the *Saturday Review* having claimed that their superiority was due to their not employing professionals.[54] Describing rowing at Oxford in 1891, Chase Mellen noted that the amateur coaches, recruited from alumni or dons, put the crew into hard training about a month before the race and that "No army is drilled with more precision than Oxford oarsmen." Daily routines and diet were strictly controlled with the crew always eating breakfast and dinner together and being provided with good quality food.[55] This level of training certainly gave the English university sportsman an advantage when competing at home. After Eton headmaster Edmund Warre proposed a ban on foreign crews at Henley in 1901, Frank Lowe, captain of London Rowing Club, pointed out that there was nothing in the Amateur Rowing Association's definition of an amateur to prevent a crew undertaking rigorous training. If foreign crews were barred because their training was more severe than that found at the Universities then the Universities should also be excluded because their crews trained much more than metropolitan clubs and they were "more nearly allied to the professional."[56]

While training and coaching might be taken seriously by some sporting constituencies in Britain, gentlemen amateurs generally structured their relationships with coaches somewhat differently to their transatlantic rivals, primarily by drawing on their social and working experiences to impose a master-servant relationship on the sporting pedagogue.[57] During the late nineteenth century, there was a significant shift in the social context within which British professional coaches operated as the enforcement of the emergent amateur ethos relegated the status of the professional coach to that of a servant, leaving a legacy that permeated nearly all aspects of twentieth-century British sport. The existing class structure contributed to the consolidation of this particular coach-athlete relationship, thereby avoiding the perceived excesses of the American coaching system while enabling professional coaching to survive within the amateur framework of sport. Looking down from their lofty and secure class positions some amateurs recognized that professional trainers included men "steady, observant and capable of forming clear and sound conclusions" but this was not a universal view and, when considered in tandem with issues over

intensive specialization and money, it is no surprise that the professional coach remained relegated to the margins.[58] This situation extended well in the inter-war period with one commentator in 1922 bemoaning the fact that there was still no coaching system in Britain equivalent to that found in America. Cricket coaches were paid very little and had to rely on tips, benefit matches and selling equipment, a method of making a livelihood that attracted men who lacked the "intellectual equipment" of American trainers. If Britain wanted to challenge America it must revise its training systems, incorporate scientific methods of preparation and hire intelligent men on good salaries.[59]

For many British amateurs, however, part of the problem in employing a professional coach was that this would actually involve a reversal of the master-servant relationship and an undermining of class status so, while the demands of performance sport ensured that opportunities continued to present themselves for professional trainers, their relationships were generally subservient. Although the boxing professors hired by the gentlemen's clubs of the 1880s were gradually replaced by men like W. Childs, the 1908-9 amateur middleweight champion who became Cambridge University's coach, boxing at local levels continued to rely on professional trainers such as Bat Mullins and Bill Natty.[60] Besides amateur and professional boxers, Natty, who adapted his approach depending on the population he was working with, trained the South London Harriers and the Catford Cycling Club, the members of Guy's Hospital, and Volunteer Battalions, including the London Rifle Brigade and the London Scottish Rifles.[61] On retirement, many cricketers obtained employment as coaches in the public schools where even England player William Attewell, addressed by the boys as "Attewell", was required not only to coach but to mark out pitches and perform similar chores.[62] In golf, professionals operated as servants, even after the formation of the Professional Golfers Association in 1901, while in upper-class racquet sports, playing professionals, known as "markers" and normally referred to by their surnames, repaired equipment as well as coaching club members.[63] In football, trainers, many of them with boxing or pedestrian experience, such as Manchester United trainer Fred Bacon, were employed to maintain discipline and to prepare players but they were strictly controlled by the amateurs who sat on the clubs' boards.[64]

A number of British amateurs clearly recognized the effectiveness of the American coaching system and were willing to employ professional trainers and even Shearman suggested that the Universities and leading clubs should be supplied with professional instructors who could supervise practice and give dietary advice.[65] The key was to make sure that these men were kept under control. The leadership given by the emerging governing bodies was considered critical in preventing any excesses and the AAA suspended athletes like C.A. Bradley who had included the costs of his trainer in his expense claims.[66] However, what legislators overlooked was that it was the symbolic capital and feelings of personal satisfaction they received from winning, rather than financial rewards, that led many amateurs to seek professional advice. In athletics, Jack White, "The Gateshead Clipper", who had coached several amateur champions at the Star Grounds in Fulham from the 1870s, became trainer to LAC during 1889 and to Cambridge University in 1893, while James "Choppy" Warburton was official trainer at Manchester Athletic Club, where many athletes "attributed their success to his careful though severe mode of preparation."[67] Spencer (Sam) Wisdom, trainer to professional sprinter Henry Hutchens and to the 1908 Olympic champion, Reggie Walker, had a long career as a professional trainer and a number of individuals like Wisdom achieved artisan status, mainly because professional coaching remained highly specialized.[68] None of these men, however, was allowed to have any administrative influence within the AAA.

Conclusion

Although there has been a tendency in recent years to downplay the extent to which amateurism as an ethos was dominated by the question of money, the rejection of financial rewards for sporting performance or for coaching underpinned much of the British resistance to all aspects of American elite sport at the turn of the twentieth century. In athletics, a dislike of "pot-hunters", who may have been amateurs but could not be regarded as gentlemen, had led British university athletes to withdraw from nearly all meetings by 1895, except those organized by the AAA and the LAC. Even in the AAA championships, fewer Oxford and Cambridge athletes were competing because the inter-varsity sports were held in the Spring. By contrast, the American university athlete, who was

practically in training all the year round, entered meetings where he was likely to get good competition and the crowds attending these events often reached tens of thousands, partly because betting was permitted but mainly because of a "lively interest in contests on equal terms between visiting and local celebrities."[69]

Part of the superiority of American sportsmen was credited to this willingness of the American public to pay to watch notable athletes and this caused disquiet among those who preferred to emphasize the benefits of widespread participation rather than elite performance. While amateurism never implied that winning was unimportant, it needed to be kept in perspective and, in contrast to the specialized training witnessed in America, which had led to "small bands of gladiators being maintained by large companies of admiring spectators", the British system supposedly resulted in thousands of active participants.[70] For the committed amateur, the inevitable outcome of financial rewards would be that winning would become more important than taking part, resulting in an activity which would no longer be a friendly encounter.[71] This was the problem with the Americans, whose system of specialization was condemned as "a *reducto ad absurdum*" of the meaning of sport, and was a central theme in Shearman's objections to the American system.[72] He considered it to be killing a wider movement towards the "practice of manly games and exercises, which England had communicated to America" a quarter of a century earlier. The American system did not stimulate the widespread athleticism seen in Britain where a voluntary system of each man training himself had led to thousands of active participants in football, cricket, and track and field. Shearman considered that athletic sports should be for the many and that, practiced only by a select group, they ceased to be of national benefit.[73]

Nevertheless, there were signs that British sport might be yielding to commercial pressures and, rather worryingly for some observers, American attitudes began to impact on the long-established structures of British sport when the university sports were moved to a Saturday in 1903, probably to try to get a bigger "gate." In addition, and reflecting the introduction of "rather extravagant ideas of training" from America, university teams increasingly spent time training at

Brighton and they were making regular efforts to support a professional coach.[74] This level of training required funding and this, in turn, meant attracting well-paying crowds. In addition, British football, cricket and athletic clubs could no longer continue without gate money, and in order to attract more spectators, it was becoming necessary to supply the best possible performers, thereby encouraging professionalism. For many years, expenses had been paid to those who could not afford to give their services free of charge, but the danger now was that the rate of expenses paid might, in time, become as objectionable as the free training table of America.[75]

This commentator was overlooking, of course, many of the existing realities of British sport. Reacting to criticisms of the American system, Englishman A.B. George, writing on the issue of amateurism in 1896, suggested that a "worse state of things exists in England." It was true that American clubs paid entry fees, travelling fees and hotel bills for championships and big games, as well as providing training tables and probably, in some cases, free board for athletes. However, he pointed out that since the NYAC had paid all the expenses of the LAC in 1895 then, according to AAA rules, the LAC athletes should have been declared professional, although he was merely making a point here since he knew full well that athletes competing out of England were not under the jurisdiction of the AAA. George then drew attention to the "shady" amateurs competing in Britain, often at athletics meetings where the prizes consisted of orders on tradesmen, which could be turned into money, while others had received money to compete. Plenty of athletes were connected to bookmakers, or got an allowance from patrons, and they ran to orders at meetings where large sums of money could be won in bets. There was no secret about this and officials were aware of it with one president of the Northern Counties Amateur Athletic Association backing athletes himself. George concluded, "I do not believe in hypocrisy and prejudice, and don't like to see English papers assailing American amateurs when there is a worse state of things existing in their own country."[76]

In many respects, then, although it seems that British commentators were publically critical of the use specialized trainers in order to win international victories, the rhetoric of amateurism was never matched by full compliance in the practical sense.[77] Even so, although British athletic officials

may have been increasingly prepared to stretch their principles when it came to preparing for international competition they remained resistant to the notion of fully embracing American methods. This reticence was connected both to the amateur ideology and to a broader nationalism. The rapidity and overwhelming nature of American sporting prowess entrenched amateur resistance in Britain still further towards adopting professional coaches, at a time when the rest of the sporting world was adopting American training regimes in order to improve international performance. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that British critics continued to attack what they considered the professionalized approach taken to sport by the Americans well into the twentieth century. Even in America, the debate over training tables had rumbled on and when Dr Boller, of Dartmouth, stated in 1912 that, because football was a commercial proposition, it was necessary to ensure men were properly fed and in a fit physical condition to take part, one observer responded, “it would hardly be possible to frame a stronger indictment of the game.”[78] This struck a chord with many British amateurs whose criticism of the training table continued to play a central role in their objections to the American approach to performance sport. On a broader front, *The Times* contrasted in 1910 the early specialization of the American athlete with a British approach that aimed to develop all-rounders. The writer declared that it would “not be boasting” to state that the winners of the forthcoming LAC public school’s championships at Stamford Bridge would, “rather more than hold their own” with the pick of the American athletes of the same age, except possibly in the field events. There should be no more talk of the athletic decadence of the British or criticism of an approach to sport that did not compel athletes to specialize, “seating them at a “training table” and putting them under a paid professor of the dynamics of the human body.” If to avoid semi-professionalism was decadence, “let us be decadents with a good heart.”[79]

Notes

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University of Chicago Press, 2005); Joel H. Wiener, "The Americanization of the British Press, 1830—1914," *Studies in Newspaper and Periodical History* 2.1-2 (1994): 61-74.

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[3] Theodore Andrea Cooke, *The Fourth Olympiad: The Official Report of the Olympic Games 1908* (The British Olympic Association), Appendix E., 762-778.

[4] Montague Shearman, "International Athletics," *The Badminton Magazine* December (1895): 574-592.

[5] *The Badminton Magazine*, October 1895, 419-420.

[6] Caspar Whitney, "The Sportsman's View-Point," *Outing* XLII No. 2: 224.

[7] Charles P. Korr, "Two Cheers for the Professional: Some Anglo-American Comparisons," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 2.3 (1985): 294–295.

[8] Matthew McIntire, "National Status, the 1908 Olympic Games and the English Press," *Media History* 15.3 (2009): 271-286; *Daily Mirror*, 1 August 1908.

[9] *Daily Mail*, 6 July 1906, 8.

[10] "The Loss of the Championships," *The Times*, 18 July 1907.

[11] Cited in Caspar Whitney, "The View-Point: Olympic Games American Committee Report," *Outing* 53, (November 1908): 248.

[12] *The Days' Doings*, 13 April 1872, 2.

[13] *The Times*, 14 August 1882, 8.

[14] William G. Durick, "The Gentlemen's Race: An Examination of the 1869 Harvard-Oxford Boat Race," *Journal of Sport History* 15.1 (Spring, 1988): 54; Roberta J. Park, "Athletes and their Training in Britain and America, 1800-1914," in *Sport and Exercise Science: Essays in the History of Sports Medicine*, eds. Jack W. Berryman and Roberta J. Park (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 71-72, 83.

[15] *London Daily News*, 28 February 1895, 6.

[16] Michael Murphy, *Athletic Training* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1914), Preface xiii.

[17] William Curtis "The International Athletics Match," *Outing* XXVII (November 1895): 157-164.

[18] Montague Shearman, "International Athletics," *The Badminton Magazine,* December 1895, 584-585.

[19] Ibid., 574-592, 586-587.

[20] Ibid., 587-590.

[21] Ibid., 589-590; For more detail on the use of the training table see Dave Day, "America's 'Mysterious "Training Tables"': British Reactions and Amateur Hypocrisy," *Sport in History* 34.1 (2013): 90-112.

[22] Salacia, *The Boat; And How to Manage it: A Treatise on the Management of Rowing and Sailing Boats* (London: Baily Brothers Cornhill, 1861), 14-20; Robert James Lee, *Exercise and Training: Their Effects Upon Health* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1873); Henry Hoole, (M.D.) *The Science and Art of Training; A Handbook for Athletes* (London: Trűbner, 1888), Preface, 1, 8-9, 30-39, 48, 50-64, 82-84, 89-91, 112-113; *Cornhill Magazine,* IX.50 (1864): 220-229; *St James's Magazine,* (February 1863): 323-325; *Cornhill Magazine,* XV (January 1867): 98-101.

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[24] *Edinburgh Evening News*, 2 June 1892.

[25] *Daily News*, 30 May 1891, 5; *Nottingham Evening Post*, 30 May 1891.

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[27] Walter Camp and Lorin Deland, *Football* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1896), 77-83, 273, 308, 316; *Sporting Life*, 23 no. 2, 7 April 1894, 8.

[28] *Sporting Life*, 23 no. 3, 1894, 8.

[29] "College Athletics, Just what it cost Yale to indulge its Sporting Proclivities," *Sporting Life*, 22 no. 10, 1893, 8.

[30] *Manchester Guardian*, 30 June 1870, 6; *Athletic News*, 23 September 1901.

[31] *Morning Post*, 9 December 1895, 2.

[32] *Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 November 1895, 9; 30 November 1895, 9; *Morning Post*, 4 November 1895, 2.

[33] *Manchester Guardian*, 4 May 1896, 7.

[34] *Western Daily Press,* 6 June 1901; *Northants Evening Telegraph*, 8 June 1901.

[35] *Hull Daily Mail*, 9 April 1914, 6.

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[37] Shearman, "International Athletics," 590.

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[43] *Manchester Guardian*, 9 July 1900, 7.

[44] "American athletes," *Morning Post*, 14 July 1900, 4.

[45] Ibid.

[46] *Observer*, 4 August 1901, 6.

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[55] Chase Mellen, "Undergraduate Life at Oxford," *Outing* XVII no.5 (February 1891): 351-352; Florence Stacpoole, "Food and Its Uses," *Bow Bells*, 29 no. 372 (February 1895): 173.

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[57] Dave Day, "Massaging the Amateur Ethos: Professional Coaches at Stockholm in 1912," *Sport in History* 32.2 (2012): 157-182; Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 198-199.

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[65] Shearman, "International Athletics," 585-590.

[66] *Manchester Guardian*, 27 July 1896, 7.

[67] *Manchester Guardian*, 10 April 1893, 6.

[68] Spencer Wisdom. Census Returns 1871(RG10/10/32/55); 1881(RG11/6/34/36); 1901(RG13/1218/113/11); 1911(RG14PN59RG78PN2).

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[71] Richard Holt, *Sport and the British. A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 97-103.

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