

Athletes in the Academy  
Ted Jaroszewicz  
October 21, 2013

I grew up on the east side of Cleveland, in an urban ethnic neighborhood, made up of Poles who arrived in the United States between 1900 and the decade after World War II. My parents, both war survivors, came to America in their late teens. My father, who was born in 1930, had grown up in a remote farming village in eastern Poland. During WWII, he and his family spent three years in a German labor camp, followed by three years in a refugee camp in Italy. The only athletic skill he'd developed was the ability to swim. My father never understood the American love affair with sports. He thought sports were a total and utter waste of time. His harshly delivered lectures on the useless nature of sports typically ended with memorable quotes such as: "sports will never help you to put bread on the table" or "you will never make a living from sports!" and "the only way you will avoid working in a factory in this country is to study and go to college!" His opposition to sports was practical – he didn't understand how sports could help me feed, clothe or shelter a family. In his experience, anything unrelated to the basics of survival was superfluous.

My mother also had a grueling war time experience, which I described in my Literary Club entrance examination. However, she was a very good athlete. The refugee camps where she stayed after 1943 had schools and scouting organizations where she learned the basic skills of team play, running, throwing and kicking. The British had a lot to do with organizing those refugee camps. In our family of six children, it was my

mother who taught us to throw, catch and kick. It was also my mother who unfailingly signed the permission and release forms that enabled us to play on sports teams.

In our very working class neighborhood and church school, the opportunities to play organized sports were limited. When I was a sixth grader, we began having gym class once a week. It's likely that President Kennedy's focus on Physical Fitness prompted the priests and nuns in charge to start a modest fitness curriculum. Thankfully, the new gym teacher started a basketball team for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Basketball and little league baseball became my entry points into organized sports. We moved to a suburb of Cleveland after my eighth grade year, where the public schools had an extensive athletic program.

I followed my father's advice to hit the books, but I also played high school football. By my senior year, I knew I was not going to play for the Ohio State Buckeyes. I told the head coach that if there was an opportunity, I'd like to play for a small college or an Ivy League school. When Dave Kelly, Yale's defensive coordinator showed up at my high school, he spoke to my coach, and I was summoned down to my guidance counselor's office. Mr. Kelly explained the benefits of a Yale education, the financial aid options, and gave me an application. There were no guaranties. I visited Yale, stayed with members of the team, but I had to wait until April, like everyone else, to find out that I'd been accepted. In late August 1975, I arrived on the Old Campus, around the same day as our fellow Literarian Aaron Betsky. The summer before my freshman year, I failed my physical exam. My extreme near sightedness, I was told, made me a candidate for a detached retina, and I was advised to avoid contact sports at all costs. When I got to Yale, I went out to the Yale Bowl to get my equipment, hoping that no one

knew about the results of my physical. “Sorry son, but you’re not going to be able to play” said Harry Jakunski, the longtime Yale Freshman Football coach. That afternoon, back at the Old Campus, I went over to check out the beautiful, 60 foot rowing shell where the coaches were scouting out tall young men for the rowing team. Within a few days, I was in the rowing tanks, and soon thereafter I was learning to row at the lagoon near the Yale Bowl. Bad news – I couldn’t play football. Good news - I didn’t have to leave Yale. Further good news - I could learn another sport and be on a team.

Rowing at Yale was a life changing experience. Our coach, Tony Johnson, taught us the importance of determining our own path to success. He posted the daily workouts during winter training. It was up to us to do the work. He did not supervise the daily stair running sessions up Payne Whitney tower. We won two Eastern Championships and competed at Henley. However, we never beat Harvard in the four mile Race at New London. The sting from those losses to Harvard has never gone away. The losses taught us that sometimes, no matter how hard one works toward a goal, failure is a possible and painful outcome.

Of the eight oarsmen and one coxswain who made up our varsity boat in my senior year in 1979, seven went on to compete on the US or Canadian National Rowing team. Four made the Olympic team in 1980, the year Jimmy Carter prohibited our entire Olympic delegation from going to Moscow for the Summer Olympics. Four of the nine became physicians; three became writers, including an Emmy Award Winner, one a Wall Street Maven, and one businessman. We were inspired by Yale Crews of the past. The Yale 8 won a gold medal at the Paris Olympics in 1924, and included Benjamin Spock, famous author and baby doctor, and James Stillman Rockefeller who went on to

run Citibank. The 1956 Yale 8 won the gold at the Melbourne Olympics. These men periodically visited us in New Haven or at Championship events, bringing their Australian Fosters Beer to help us celebrate our victories and commemorate theirs.

The friendships we made are strong. A group of us continue to compete at the Head of the Charles Regatta annually. Two days ago, we raced in Boston for the 30<sup>th</sup> year in a row. This past summer, we competed at a Masters Regatta at Henley, in our age category of 55+, and brought home a victory.

I have embraced the place that sports have played in all aspects of my life, our culture and especially in our colleges. I married an athlete. My wife Anne was on the varsity field hockey and lacrosse teams at Penn. Our three boys played organized sports from the time they were five years old. My middle son was a recruited athlete, and is on the Harvard rowing team. Sports are an integral part of my family's life.

My undying enthusiasm for sports as part of the college experience is not universally shared. At Yale, around 2005, recently retired President Rick Levin unilaterally reduced the number of recruited athletes that Yale admits. In 2012, Yale admitted 177 recruited athletes, even though its Ivy League cap is 230. William Bowen, retired president of Princeton, coauthored two books critical of the admissions process for athletes at academically elite schools. Graduation rates are not the problem, but budgets and precious admissions spots are big issues. They are concerned that the "athletic arms race" has come to the Ivy League and Division III schools like Williams, Amherst and Trinity in the east, and schools like Kenyon College here in Ohio. They are concerned that recruited athletes have a significant admissions advantage over the average pool of applicants, and that too much money is being spent on athletic

programs and facilities. Of course, a regular reader of the New York Times or Wall Street Journal could tell us that there is also an “admissions arms race” that has been going on for more than 20 years, where affluent parents spend large amounts of money on consultants, tutors and trainers to prepare their children for the uncertain process of applying to America’s elite colleges.

Athletes **do** make up a significant percentage of the undergraduates at academically elite colleges. In the Ivy League, by agreement among the Presidents of the respective schools, each college is permitted to reserve 10% to 20% of their annual admissions slots for recruited athletes, depending on the number of varsity sports they sponsor. Unlike the Big Ten, Pac-10 or SEC, sports are not revenue producers at the Ivy League; the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), which includes Williams, Amherst, Trinity, and Wesleyan; or the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC), which includes schools like Kenyon, Oberlin, and DePauw.

Harvard has an undergraduate population of 6,700 students. It has 40 varsity sports. 1,000 students, or about 15% of the student body, are varsity athletes. Williams has 32 varsity sports, an undergraduate population of 2,000, of whom about 40% are varsity athletes. Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, has 1,700 students, 20 varsity sports, and 30% of the students are varsity athletes. Other than in football, many of these schools compete for league and national championships. They admit bright, ambitious students who want to excel at the highest levels academically and athletically.

Despite the reductions in admitted athletes at Yale, the Bulldogs won the NCAA National Hockey title earlier this year. In men’s basketball, Williams has reached the finals of the Men’s Division III NCAA tournament three times in the last decade, winning

in 2003. The Amherst Women's basketball team has been in the finals of the NCAA Division III basketball championships six times in the last six years, and won in 2011; their winning team including Cincinnati Sara Leyman. Harvard's men's rowing team has won 8 national championships since 1984. Trinity has won 12 national squash titles. The Kenyon Lords have won 32 of the last 34 NCAA Division III National Men's Swimming Championships. Year in, and year out, all of these schools appear in the US News and World Report's top colleges in America. It seems to me that the athletic and academic combination is working pretty well.

As a point of comparison, Ohio State has 37 varsity sports, an undergraduate population in Columbus of 43,000, of whom approximately 1,100 are varsity athletes, a ratio of about 2%. During its history, Ohio State has won national championships in its men's athletic programs 28 times. One can fairly ask who has a higher institutional commitment to sports, Harvard, Williams and Kenyon; or Ohio State.

I raised the question of the role of sports in academically elite colleges with several of my friends over the past few months, I got mixed reactions. I called Priscilla Hunt, whose father William Stevenson, had been President of Oberlin for sixteen years. He had gone to Princeton, and had won a gold medal in the 1924 Olympics, in the 4 x 400 track event. Priscilla served on the board of Oberlin for many years. I asked her "Why does Oberlin College have a football team? I thought it was a world famous musical conservatory." "I don't know. It's an interesting question," she said, "we've always had a football team." When I posed the question to fellow Literarian Peter Briggs at lunch one day, he thundered "if we are here to discuss getting rid of sports in schools, then I am leaving!" "No Peter, I just want to know why we have sports in colleges. We're

one of a few countries in the world that places such a high emphasis on athletics in an academic environment, and there's a lot of controversy brewing about it these days." Peter's view is unambiguous. Sports in colleges and high schools are essential, but he's troubled by the money and academic issues at Division I colleges. He wrote a wonderful paper on the subject entitled Underpaid and Undereducated.

Peter introduced me to a friend of his, a renowned author, who now teaches at Princeton. Via email, he told me "I am a complete hypocrite. I love it when Harvard wins (especially over Yale, but Princeton and Dartmouth will do). But I see lots of problems with the inevitable creep of big time sports. Princeton athletes seem to work 20 to 40 hours a week for their teams."

Most universities around the world admit students based primarily on the results of entrance examinations. In most western European countries, the decision to become a plumber or a college student comes at around age 15 or 16. Japan and China both admit students to their universities solely on the basis of an annually administered entrance exam. No credit is given for grade point average, the strength of teacher recommendations or a student's participation in extra-curricular activities. Failure on this one day examination means waiting another year for the chance to pass. And in those countries, as in many western countries, going to the right university leads to good jobs and careers in government and industry. Like my father, academic institutions in most parts of the world might say "what do sports have to do with going to college?"

Today's debate among Presidents, boards of trustees, faculty and alumni of academically elite colleges about the tradeoffs between sports and academics is being

stoked by research funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The work is coordinated by the College Sports Project, based at Northwestern University. Given the national and worldwide interest among highly qualified high school seniors to gain admission to academically exclusive schools, they question why so many admissions slots are reserved for recruited athletes. Sports are expensive. “Why do we have such a high emphasis on athletes?” they ask. We’re turning away great minds; we’re spending money on fields, coaches and natatoriums instead of classrooms, laboratories and professor’s salaries. How are sports helping the core mission of our great institutions of learning?

It’s a good question. Some of our ancient ancestors thought that the combination of sports and academic inquiry are the essence of a civilized society and its institutions of learning. I thought it was worth a trip back in time to learn about how this debate got started.

The Egyptians, whose culture emerged over 4000 years before the Common Era, left a clear record of the importance of sports and athletics in their world. Ahmed Touny, writing in a paper for the International Olympic Academy in 1984 on the “History of Sports in Ancient Egypt” says, “There are numberless representations [of sports] on tomb and temple walls, but none is more striking than the oldest document relating to sport. It is a unique mural... that depicts the Pharaoh himself, Zoser the Great, the founder of the third dynasty nearly 3,000 years before Christ. This mural shows Zoser participating in the running program of the Heb Sed festival, a symbol of the significance of physical fitness to the Ancient Egyptians” Touny’s photographs of the murals from ancient tombs and temples shows the Egyptians conducting athletic events that are all

familiar to us, including gymnastics, javelin throwing, weightlifting, equestrian sports, high jump, swimming, tug of war and running.

Robert Mechikoff, author of the textbook A History and Philosophy of Sport and Education writes “The Pharaoh Akhenaton (who reigned in the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC, started a royal regatta – a race between oarsmen, known as the Festival of Oars. It took place on the Nile River. It is quite probable that this particular crew race was the beginning of the sport of competitive rowing.”

The Ancient Greeks clearly had an immense influence on our culture – academically, athletically and philosophically. Stephen G. Miller, in his book Arête, Greek Sports from Ancient Sources opens with a beautiful excerpt from Homer’s Iliad, where Homer recounts a competition honoring the fallen Patroklos, childhood and lifelong friend of Achilles. Patroklos, fighting in place of Achilles, is killed by Hector outside the walls of Troy. After Patroklos is cremated,

“Achilles held the people there and sat them in broad assembly, and brought prizes for games out of his ships, cauldrons and tripods and horses and mules and high headed and powerful cattle and beautifully girdled women.” Homer describes such prizes for a chariot race, a boxing match, a wrestling contest, a footrace, face to face combat with shield and spear, a pig iron toss, archery, and spear throwing. Homer’s accounts make it clear that the contestants were highly skilled athletes, competed vigorously and honorably, and were keenly interested in winning and in the prizes. The story establishes that the custom of awarding valuable prizes for winning athletic events is a long and ancient practice.

The Ancient Greek Olympic Games, held at Olympia, about 150 miles west of Athens, date to 776 BC. The original competition included only a running race on a straight track, called the Stadion, a sprint of about 192 meters (a unit of measure known as a Stade). Zahra Newby, in the book Athletics in the Ancient World, tells us that "...for most of Olympia's history [from 776 BC] until the festival was finally abolished, at the end of the fourth century AD, the victor in the Stade race had the honor of having that particular Olympic Year named after him."

The rewards for victory at the Olympic Games were modest – wreaths made of laurel, olive branches or wild celery. However the rewards and honors for a victorious athlete when he got home could be great – bronze statues on pedestals describing his victories, odes, exemption from military service, and financial rewards such as tax abatements and free meals for life.

Newby tells us that "Team contests such as ball oriented games or rowing competitions did occasionally take place in the ancient {Greek} world, but usually formed part of the education and training of young citizens, rather than being held as events at Pan-Hellenic festivals." Most free Greeks learned to swim and row. These were important military skills.

The Greek navy in the early fifth century BC consisted largely of triremes – three level attack ships, each powered by 170 oarsmen. Themistocles, a Greek general and politician, convinced Athens to build a large navy, which ultimately numbered 200 ships. The math is striking – 34,000 free Greek oarsmen were required to power those ships. Thanks to fit, well trained athletes, and clever naval strategy, the Greeks defeated the Persians in the Battle of the Straits of Salamis, destroying a much larger Persian Navy.

The Greeks' survival rate was high because, if their ships were hit, large numbers of survivors were able to swim to shore. Had the Persians won at Salamis, our history might have been significantly different. We might not have known Plato or Aristotle.

The Ancient Greeks were sports fanatics. They travelled long distances to compete and to watch as spectators. The system of training athletes was sophisticated and easily recognizable by today's standards. Athletic training began early, in schools known by names familiar to us, such as the Gymnasium, the Academy and the Lyceum.

The word gymnasium has at its root the word Gymnos, which means to disrobe, or get naked. The Greeks trained and competed in the nude. At some point, a Greek athlete realized that he could run faster without a loincloth, and the custom of competing in the nude was born. Miller tells us "education in antiquity was set in the gymnasium, that the Academy of Plato was first and foremost, a place of exercise for the body..." Well to do Greek families sent their sons to gymnasiums to begin their education in the athletic arts at age seven. There they were taught the skills and methods to compete in the events that formed the core of the Olympic contest – running, wrestling, boxing, pankration, the javelin, the discus and the long jump. Like today, very few made it to Olympia. They competed in local athletic festivals. Over time, the gymnasiums incorporated three basic curriculums – training of the body for athletic events and ultimately for military service, training in reading, writing and mathematics; and training in music. They were educating future citizen soldiers. Today, we might call this a liberal arts education; in our military academies, the training of an officer and a gentleman.

The practice of training young men in the gymnasiums probably began in the pre-Olympic era, and continued through to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Gymnasiums were eventually

established throughout the Hellenic world, including Jerusalem and Rome. Plato, by some accounts an accomplished competitive wrestler, had a range of views on the importance of athletics and education, particularly on the need for balance between the two. In the dialogues of the Republic, Socrates concludes a long discussion with Plato on the subject of athletics by saying “he who mingles music with gymnastics in the fairest of proportions, and best attempers them to the soul, may be rightly called the true musician and harmonist in a far higher sense... You are quite right, Plato says to Socrates. And such a presiding genius will be always required in our State if government is to last.” Mechikoff tells us that “to Aristotle, it was important that the rational soul be educated because the health of the mind was dependent on the health of the body. Aristotle believed athletics enabled youths to develop as strong, healthy citizens, who would defend Athens in times of war and serve her in time of peace...because the health of the soul and mind was contingent on a healthy body, physical education (gymnastics) was necessary.”

This system of thinking, education and athletic competition came to a crashing end in the late fourth century AD. Theodosius I, the last ruler of a united Roman empire, decreed that Nicene Christianity was the one and true religion of the Roman state. He destroyed the Greek temples, including the Temple at Alexandria. He banned athletic festivals, because they were pagan rituals to honor false gods. The Dark Ages had begun. It would take nearly 1,500 years before the Olympic Games were resurrected, and a Harvard student, James Brendan Connolly, would win the first victory medal awarded in 1896.

Intellectual and technological progress slowed in the Dark and Middle Ages. The focus was on survival and saving one's soul. The purification of the soul often meant the mortification of the body. Christianity taught, thanks to St. Augustine and others, that the body was a vessel of sin and evil. The soul had to be saved through prayer, worship and suffering. There was no place for frivolous pursuits like athletics. Academic inquiry was the province of the clergy, working in private seclusion in Abbeys throughout Europe. The aristocrats of Europe were withdrawn in their castles, protecting themselves from the invading, plundering armies of other aristocrats. The activity of conquest and defense formed the basis of the few athletic pursuits that did occur during this challenging period of western history. Land owners sponsored equestrian events, jousting contests and one on one combat with swords or axes for their officers, or knights. The Renaissance and the Reformation eventually led to the reintroduction of a broader range of athletics among the nobility.

Oxford and Cambridge Universities were founded in the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were heavily influenced by ecclesiastical communities. It wasn't until the 16<sup>th</sup> century that the sporting life became an important part of a student's time at these colleges. Ronald A. Smith writes in his book Sports and Freedom. The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics that "participation in sport [at these colleges] reflected the elite nature of the student body. Boating, cricket, horse racing, hunting and tennis were all active pursuits in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries...yet these sports were not particularly well organized, and they often drew the scorn of university officials."

While the early Deans and Dons of Oxford and Cambridge may have scoffed at the athletic pursuits of their wealthy charges, the British ultimately embraced the

concept of sports in private grammar schools and their two premier universities. Like Aristotle 2200 years earlier, British educators came to understand that vigorous exercise produced healthier and more balanced young men. The discipline and leadership lessons learned through organized sports would ultimately help young men be superior military officers. To this day, Eton requires participation in sports. “Boys are obliged to commit themselves to a major sport each half, whilst minor sports are optional. Major sports are as follows: Football (meaning soccer), Rugby, Hockey, Rowing, Field Games, Athletics, Cricket or Tennis.” Eton began playing cricket against other schools in the 1790’s. Oxford first played Cambridge in cricket in 1827, followed two years later by the first Oxford Cambridge boat race.

Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown, Dartmouth and Rutgers also began their institutional lives in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries with strong religious affiliations. Their early founders had an interest in educating clerics and teachers. They had a universal aversion to gambling and drinking. Ball and game playing of any sort were next in line on the list of deadly sins. They instituted rules to discourage or prevent ball playing. Yale’s early by-laws provided for a punishment of sixpence for ball playing in the College Yard. Harvard had rules prohibiting hunting, fishing or skating without permission. Yale was producing graduates like Jonathan Edwards, the well-known theologian who wrote religious thrillers such as “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Puritan Christianity and the ghosts of Theodosius and Augustine haunted the early colleges of America.

Thomas Mendenhall, who taught history at Yale and served as President of Smith College from 1959 to 1975, authored a book called The Harvard Yale Boat Race

1852-1924. He describes a day at Harvard or Yale in 1840 as follows, "...morning prayers at 5:30 began the college day in New Haven; at Harvard all water still came from the pumps in the Harvard Yard; and the curriculum for the first two years at both institutions consisted almost entirely of Latin, Greek, and mathematics. The total absence of athletics from the American college scene in 1840 is almost impossible for a modern generation to appreciate." College athletics began to develop as an antidote to the dreariness of Latin and Greek recitations, mandatory attendance at chapel and strict rules of conduct, enforced by faculty and administrators under the guiding principal of "in loco parentis".

Athletics and games started at American colleges in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries because young men needed diversion and entertainment. Notwithstanding the rules, young men at all the original American colleges played a variety of ball oriented games, sought out forms of recreation like hunting, fishing and riding, and caused plenty of mischief in protest of the stifling disciplinary environment. Smith says they could harass tutors "by placing animals in their desks, or depositing hydrogen sulfide in their rooms," a gas that smells like rotten eggs.

Some games were physical and dangerous, as was the case at Harvard, where an annual sophomore vs. freshman football game (more similar to soccer than rugby) took place on the first Monday of the fall term, which was known as Bloody Monday. Smith highlights the rough play of this football rush in a class poem from the 1840s:

"The Delta can tell of the deeds we've done, the fierce fought fields we've lost and won, the shins we've cracked, And noses we've whacked, the eyes we've blacked, and all in fun"

In the mid 1840's, small groups of students at Harvard and Yale purchased boats that could be rowed on the Charles River and in New Haven Harbor. These small groups purchased several boats over time, and conducted races amongst members of classes. In the spring of 1852, a Yale Junior and member of the Yale Boat Club, James Whiton, was taking time off from his studies. Daniella Garran, author of A History of Collegiate Rowing, tells us "Whiton's father was one of the directors of a new railroad the Boston, Concord and Montreal, which was having difficulty competing with the other railroad companies...throughout New England. Whiton...found himself talking to the superintendent of the railroad, James Elkins, as the train chugged along through New Hampshire. Whiton casually commented as they passed a beautiful lake that it boasted a nice stretch upon which a rowing race could take place that could be viewed from the train. Fascinated at the prospects for publicity, Elkins told Whiton: "if you will get up a regatta, I will pay all of the bills." Thus was born the first intercollegiate competition – a commercially sponsored athletic event to promote a railroad and a resort area on Lake Winnepesaukee. The race took place on August 3, 1852. Harvard's boat *Oneida* won easily over Yale's boat *Shawmut*. The presenter of the trophy of silver tipped black walnut oars was presidential candidate and New Hampshire resident Franklin Pierce.

Harvard and Yale raced intermittently over the next 20 years, until they established their annual regatta in New London in 1878. In 1869, Harvard challenged Oxford to a duel race, which took place on the Thames River in London. The crews raced in four oared shells with coxswain, on the same 4 ¼ mile course used for the Oxford Cambridge Boat Race. Smith tells us that between 750,000 and 1 million people stood along the banks of the Thames River to watch the race, including "the Prince of

Wales, the newly elected Prime Minister William Gladstone, novelist Charles Dickens and...the philosopher John Stuart Mill.” Oxford won the race by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a length.

The first intercollegiate baseball game was played between Williams and Amherst in 1869. Football started with a contest between Rutgers and Princeton, also in 1869. Intercollegiate competition became immensely popular in the east. Crowds of more than 20,000 gathered to watch rowing competitions in Worcester, and then on Saratoga Lake in Upstate New York. The commercially sponsored rowing competitions provided the draw for baseball and track teams to put on their games. In 1893, the Thanksgiving Day football game between Princeton and Yale, at the Polo Grounds in New York City drew 40,000 spectators, including the social elite of Manhattan. College presidents and boards of overseers liked the publicity that the contests brought to their institutions. Football became the prominent spectator event, while baseball grew into America’s pastime.

For the first 60 years, sporting teams were organized, financed and managed by students and athletic associations, independent of university administration. Most of the gate receipts went into the coffers of the student run athletic associations. From the beginning, conflicts arose about consistent rules of play; professional athletes, alumni and graduate students playing with undergraduates; professional coaching, betting and prize money. When special needs arose, the athletic associations raised extra money. Ronald Smith tells us that in 1901, the Harvard Athletic Association hired William Reid, Jr. as their first truly professional head football coach, at a salary of \$7,000, twice the average professor’s salary, and nearly as much as Charles Eliot, who had been President of Harvard since 1869. “Reid wanted a rational approach like that of Yale,

which had the organizational leadership of Walter Camp, and a private academic tutoring system for athletes paid for out of gate receipts.”

The brutality of football caused severe injuries and occasional deaths. Like today, the equipment did not match the speed of the game, the strength of the players or the development of innovative offensive plays like the flying wedge. The NCAA was formed in 1905 with intense pressure from President Theodore Roosevelt. Its initial goals were to alter the rules of football to make the game safer, and set inter-institutional standards for eligibility and the rules by which colleges would play sports.

All along, students had to abide by the academic rules of each school. Academic eligibility was always required for undergraduates to participate in the extra curriculum. Academic eligibility was a constant source of frustration for athletic associations and students who were on the academic borderline. Scheduling games around classes and examinations or getting leave to compete in away games was also a problem. Faculties fought the infringement on class time that playing or watching sports created, a challenge that has not gone away.

There was no innocent and pure era in the development of intercollegiate sports in America. Like the history and development of our country, intercollegiate sports did not take a smooth upward trajectory. It lurched forward, with many conflicts, controversies and problems. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, colleges began to take institutional control of sports teams. Over the last 100 years, leagues and conferences formed to foster competition among schools of similar size and academic orientation, with some thought of geographical proximity to save on travel time and costs. Colleges

were also separated into Divisions based on the size of their student bodies. The NCAA has developed a life of its own.

Despite the challenges, sports became an avenue through which thousands of students learned the rigors of exercise, teamwork, discipline, delayed gratification, and in the words of *Wide World of Sports* – the thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat. At academically elite schools, nearly half of the recruited athletes in the High Profile sports of football and basketball have come from working class or minority households, where neither parent went to college. These athletes from humble backgrounds used their education as springboards to go into business, finance, medicine, teaching and community service. Sports paved the way for improved racial and gender opportunities in these schools. The first major Title IX protest was at Yale, by the women's rowing team in 1976, who were asking for equal shower and locker room facilities. Today, women have achieved record levels of participation in college sports.

According to the Ivy League website, "Harvard's football team featured the first black All-American, William Henry Lewis, who had been an undergraduate at Amherst College. He was voted as Amherst's captain in 1890. Lewis went on to Harvard Law School and continued his football career at Harvard. He was an All American in 1892 and 1893. He became an assistant district attorney in Boston after graduation."

Like the arts and the sciences, sports at America's elite colleges created avenues for social, educational and economic mobility. It has not been an easy road. There are big issues today because so many young people are trying to gain admission to these schools. Finding the right balance between sports and academics will continue to be a prickly challenge for College Presidents and Boards of Trustees. Academic standards

for athletes should be the same as for non-athletes. Bad behavior by athletes needs to be dealt with promptly and fairly. But America's elite colleges should not be the exclusive preserve of intellectuals in Ivory Towers. The combination of sports and academics has produced a uniquely American brew of achievement, school spirit and leaders for the past 160 years.

It was a long journey from Egypt to Lake Winnepesaukee. Athletics in the American Academy started as an antidote to required attendance at chapel, never ending lectures and recitations, and onerous rules of conduct. Students needed to walk, to run; to play, to compete. The commercially sponsored boat race between Harvard and Yale in 1852 gave birth to a long and glorious, but complex tradition of Athletes in the American Academy. We're only a short way into the current chapter of this 5000 year old experiment.

I know today that my father's skepticism about sports was the result of his upbringing and wartime experience. I regret that he never saw me compete as an oarsman. I also regret that he never saw all of the doors that sports and Yale opened for me, including those at 500 East Fourth Street. It took a long time for me to resolve the internal conflicts that his admonitions about sports caused. But the historical evidence is clear. Sports are an integral part of the American collegiate experience. For most of us who have been athletes, especially at America's best schools, we were educated, learned important life lessons while training and competing, made lifelong friendships, and wound up in interesting careers. In America, one can be a scholar, an athlete and put bread on the table.