

DOES MARRIAGE HARM THE ATHLETE?

"No woman ever did a fighter any good," enthusiasts tell you. "The prize-fighter and the lady just don't mix."

To prove their point they will point out that Jack Dempsey started to fade shortly after he married Estelle Taylor, that Max Schmeling had a bad year after his hymeneal, that Joe Louis, the Chocolate Dropper, turned soft and lost to Schmeling after his marriage. They snort disgustedly and agree that women ought to be kept as far away from the ring as possible—even at a scalpers' prices.

Look at the other side of the argument. In virtually any sport you can name there are dozens of top-notch married athletes. These men and women have not been enervated by the slippers and the fireside. Despite anything the hanger-on may say, Joe Louis and Max Schmeling both seem able to give a pretty good account of themselves in the ring. Ellsworth Vines, Fred Perry, Baron Von Cramm, Bunny Austin, and Jack Crawford all play a rather fair tennis game despite the fact that they are married.

Frankly, I fail to understand how marriage can interfere with an athlete's efficiency just as

long as he follows a sensible training routine. Sex is probably less a problem to those married, than it is to the bachelors and spinsters. The sexual urge and desire to mate are natural in the athlete despite exhaustive exercise. Every coach has to cope with this problem, and in a great many cases those single are the worst offenders.

Opinions among leading gynaecologists, urologists and psychiatrists are almost unanimous to the effect that marriage or sex *per se* does not affect the athlete, provided that the individual is sensible and adaptable.

However, you will find in the more violent contact sports an attempt on the part of managers and trainers to avoid the marriage of their athletes. Obviously, it is difficult to draw the line between a perfectly regulated marital life and one in which some slight over-indulgence exists, especially where the athletes concerned can hardly be bracketed with the intelligentsia. So it is that most boxers are not permitted alone with their wives for a period of at least six weeks before a big fight; that no lady loiterers are permitted around training camps; that most professional hockey

contracts contain a clause forbidding players to marry during the season—not until May, to be exact—and not within two or three months preceding the opening of the season.

A questionnaire was sent to fifty prominent married sports figures. The replies indicated definitely that with training habits checked, and diet supervised, training was better and more regular. Most of those queried felt that their endurance was better since marriage because of this factor. Apparently marriage and a well-controlled sex life offered the most satisfactory solution to the problem which previously existed for them as single athletes. Sex as the frustrated desire of the unmarried athlete can be far more harmful than sex as the regulated practice of the married man.

In the final analysis, the question of whether or not marriage harms the athlete boils down to

the complex make-up of the individual himself. There is no universal regimen for training. A schedule is applicable only in the case of the individual, and he should be responsible to, and for, the schedule.

If an athlete is going to rise to great competitive heights, he must have a flaming desire to win, a sincere belief in his ability to do so, a grim singleness of purpose, and the ability to relax or fire up as the occasion demands. Requisite confidence and poise are gained only by following at periods a rigorous training regimen, whether the athlete be married or not.

The fact that an athlete is married does not necessarily deprive him of these qualities. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence that a well-regulated married life can be made an asset to anyone wishing to follow an athletic career.—*Marvin A. Stevens, condensed from Sports Illustrated.*

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Not Insurable

A MAN went to an insurance office to have his life insured the other day.

"Do you cycle?" the agent asked.

"No," said the man.

"Do you motor?"

"No."

"Do you, then, perhaps fly?"

"No, no," said the applicant, laughing; "I have no dangerous . . ."

"Sorry, sir," the agent broke in, "but we no longer insure pedestrians."—*Parade.*