

A Study of the Role of University Sports Clubs in Japan in the Growth of the Lifetime Sports Movement

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A Study of the Role of University Sports Clubs in Japan in the Growth of the Lifetime Sports Movement

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess the role that university sports clubs in Japan play in the growth of the "Lifetime Sport" movement. 326 members of sports clubs at Kanazawa University were interviewed, these members being divided into 3 groups according to their status as club captain, ordinary member, or beginner. Using data and statistics gathered from the interviewees, and also with reference to the author's personal experience of sports clubs, an assessment was made as to how closely members' experiences match the objectives of "Lifetime Sport". The 4 major areas of focus in the study were : level of competitiveness within the clubs, with particular emphasis on attitude to injuries ; catering for the needs of beginners ; creating a welcoming environment for foreign students ; and preparation of members for continuing involvement in sport after graduation. The results of the study suggested that more effort needs to be made at the university sports club level to make students aware of the "Lifetime Sport" movement, and of how they can contribute to it.

Key words : Lifetime Sport, University Sports Clubs.

Introduction

Japanese society is in the middle of a period of rapid change. Every year sees the introduction of new technology aimed at reducing human labour and increasing quality of life. Japanese workers, however, are now also faced with rising unemployment as a result of the continuing slump. In the background to these and other changes, lies the shadow of the advent of an ageing society, with the estimation that, by the turn of the century, 16.3% of the population will be over 65 years of age. Along with changes for the better, this society in flux also brings with it, then, a certain instability.

One of the most obvious and immediate results of the various changes, is that there will be a significant increase in leisure time, and a major increase in the number of people in a position to take advantage of it. The unemployed might find it difficult to see the positive side of this increased leisure, and the elderly, after a lifetime of strict adherence to the work ethic, might find themselves at a loss for how to occupy their time.

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What is clear, therefore, is that the concept of "Lifetime Sport", which seeks to promote participation of people of all ages and all levels in sport and recreational activities, has a very important role to play in this changing society. The meaning of "Lifetime Sport" covers a wider range of themes than merely taking part in sport to keep fit, but to underline the importance of "Lifetime Sport" for society as a whole, it is sufficient to quote the statistic that, early in the next century, there will be for every four working people, one person over the age of 65 to support²⁾.

It will, then, be the responsibility of each individual to strive to stay fit and healthy, so as to reduce the burden on society, and one of the ways to do this is to participate in sport and recreation throughout one's lifetime.

The aim of this study is to investigate the current state of the "Lifetime Sport" movement in Japan, and to discuss to what extent Japan is prepared for meeting the challenge of maintaining a healthy nation through regular and continued participation in sport.

It must be remembered that sport is not just concerned with physical activity, but also plays a role in mental well-being, sense of community and comradeship, and feelings of achievement. Any attempt, therefore, to study "Lifetime Sport" in Japan, should necessarily focus not only on obvious sporting institutions and environments, but should also consider, for example, public institutions, private companies and educational establishments, assessing how ready they are to welcome the "Lifetime Sport" concept, what factors are hindering the effective integration of "Lifetime Sport" into their structure, and what changes can and should be made to facilitate a smooth transition to a society that positively accepts the concept of "Lifetime Sport".

Unfortunately, such a comprehensive survey is beyond the scope of this study. The focus of the study has been narrowed down, therefore, to concentrate on the social group that will influence the success or failure of the "Lifetime Sport" movement on into the future; that is, the younger generation of school children and university students. If this social group is not investigated properly, with their attitudes to sport and their sporting experiences being considered, then little headway will be made in the promotion of "Lifetime Sport".

"In the world of sports in Japan, until now, the focus has unfailingly been sporting activities based on education, discipline and training, or on the concept of competition."⁵⁾

This quotation gives us an immediate clue to the problems faced by educational establishments in meeting the challenge of "Lifetime Sport". If sporting activities at schools and universities are imbued with the ethos of competition, with winning or losing being a major factor, then how does this colour the younger generation's view of "Lifetime Sport", where the emphasis is more on everyone being able to participate at the level that is most suited to their ability and motivation.

It should be emphasized, then, that for "Lifetime Sport" to be promoted successfully, the sporting experiences of the younger generation within the field of education need to be assessed. The aim of this study is to contribute to that assessment by considering the situation of university sports clubs in Japan and their particular contribution to the "Lifetime Sport"

movement. Although constituting only a restricted sub-group of sporting experiences of the younger generation, university sports clubs nevertheless provide useful insights into the kinds of attitudes that are formed whilst at university, and into the sporting structure within an institution of higher education. It is hoped that the knowledge gained from this may then be helpful in shaping future policies for the development of "Lifetime Sport".

Do the clubs encourage students to continue sporting activities throughout their lives, regardless of whether or not facilities and equipment are readily available? Are, indeed, students aware of the desirability of keeping up regular exercise on a long-term basis? These are some of the questions that the study seeks to answer, whilst considering in detail the four main topics of; level of competitiveness; beginners; foreign students; and sport after graduation.

Method

The best method for deepening understanding of university sports clubs is to hear the opinions of as wide a range of participants as possible, covering a broad spectrum of sports. As the author was a research student at Kanazawa University, and also a member of that university's badminton club, it was decided that sports clubs at Kanazawa University would be the subject of the study. Although the scope of the study is thus limited to one university, it is felt that, until the study can be expanded to include a number of Japanese universities, the situation at Kanazawa University can be taken as representative of that to be found at most national universities.

To collect the views of as many club members as possible, a questionnaire was created which sought members' opinions of their club activities, in relation to the four main topics listed above. The questions were in the form of multiple choice with, in most cases, only one choice being permitted, and, in a minority of cases, more than one choice being acceptable. There were also several questions asking for a more detailed explanation of the subjects' attitudes or opinions to be written in the space provided.

This questionnaire was implemented on a trial basis during the course of April 1995, the subjects being a random selection of 70 club members from a variety of sports. This trial questionnaire was then refined, with additional questions being introduced to reflect more clearly the stated aim of investigating the link between university sports clubs and the promotion of "Lifetime Sport". For example, a series of questions was included, probing the subjects' plans for participating in sport after graduation, and their satisfaction with the availability of facilities.

It was also decided that, to get a more detailed picture, three separate questionnaires should be conducted. The first focused on club captains, and asked for more factual information regarding, for example, content and aims of training camps, and the devising of the training and practice menus. The second questionnaire had the aim of finding out from club members who were beginners when they joined the club, whether or not they felt their needs, specifically as beginners, were being adequately catered for, and how successfully they had managed to

integrate into the club and feel comfortable as a fully-accepted member. The third was really the main focus of the study, taking as its subjects the ordinary club members, who were neither captains nor beginners. They were asked to answer questions covering such topics as their attitude to training; their level of competitiveness; and whether or not they continue training whilst carrying an injury.

These three questionnaires were implemented over a period of four weeks, in May and June 1995. The number of completed questionnaires collected by the author was 24 for the captains' questionnaire; 106 for the beginners; and 296 for the ordinary members; giving a response rate of 86%, 72%, and 66% respectively. The total number of clubs covered by the study amounted to 28.

All completed questionnaires were read, leading to the compilation of a statistical record based on responses to the multiple choice questions. This is displayed in the graphs and charts in the results section. In addition, the reading also gave rise to a clear picture of the general atmosphere of university sports clubs, their organisational make-up, and the motivations and attitudes of their members.

The situation described by the answers provided in the questionnaires was then assessed, using the author's personal experience of university clubs as a guideline, and also with reference to a variety of articles from different sources, written during the last five years on the topic of the promotion of "Lifetime Sport".

It should be emphasized that the assessment that follows is from the viewpoint of the value of "Lifetime Sport". Whereas there may, in certain circumstances, be merit in commitment to hard and intensive training, this study investigates university sports clubs from the basis that they exist to provide sporting opportunity for amateur sports enthusiasts, who are not concerned with financial rewards or international recognition.

It should also be noted that, for the purposes of adding to the lively debate on "Lifetime Sport" in Japan, the author will purposefully adopt a critical stance, focusing on what are believed to be the aspects of university sports clubs that hinder the promotion of "Lifetime Sport".

Results

This is a record of the main results of the study, compiled using statistics from the three questionnaires outlined above. It concentrates on the results that serve to highlight the points of discussion that will follow, and so, where references are made to graphs or charts within the main body of the essay, please consult this section.

Level of Competitiveness

Fig. 1 shows members' attitudes towards training camps, including opinions that they are too long, too hard, and ineffective.

Fig. 2 displays members' attitudes to training, 19.6% saying that they regularly do not want

to attend. and only 28.4% being of the opinion that they positively look forward to training. Fig. 3 shows us that pressure is felt by many members to continue training despite injuries. This pressure might be exerted directly or indirectly, as members are mindful of upcoming tournaments or training camps, and are worried that even just a minor break from the regular hard training would leave them at a disadvantage. They are also regularly reminded by senior club members that to miss training and practice sessions inconveniences other members of the club.

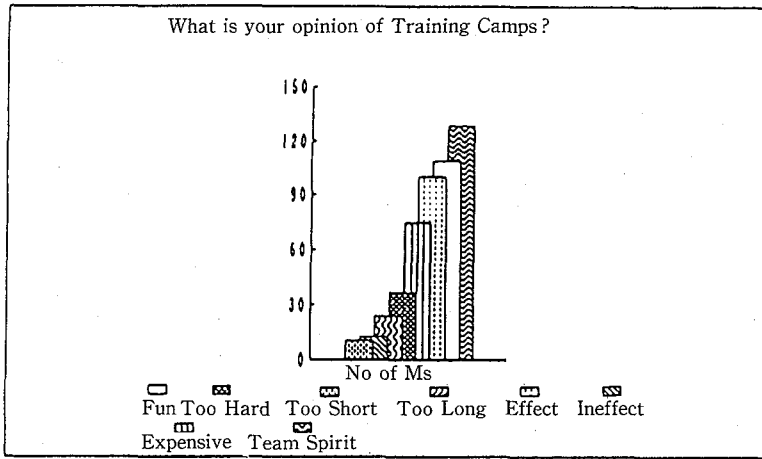


Fig. 1 Training Camps

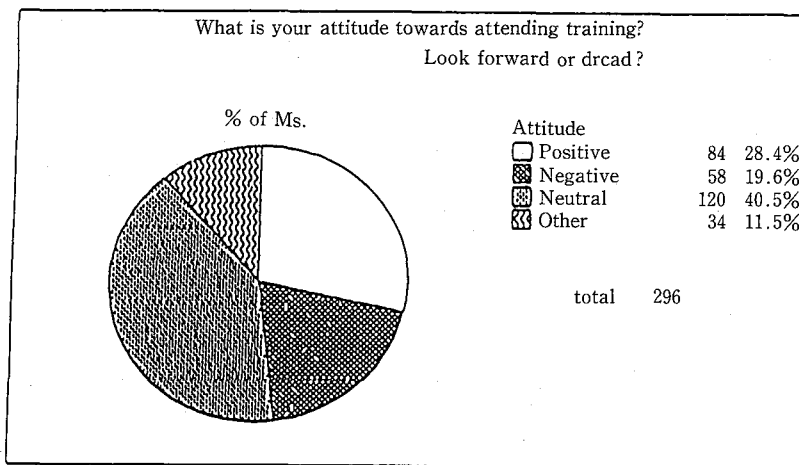


Fig. 2 Attitude towards Training

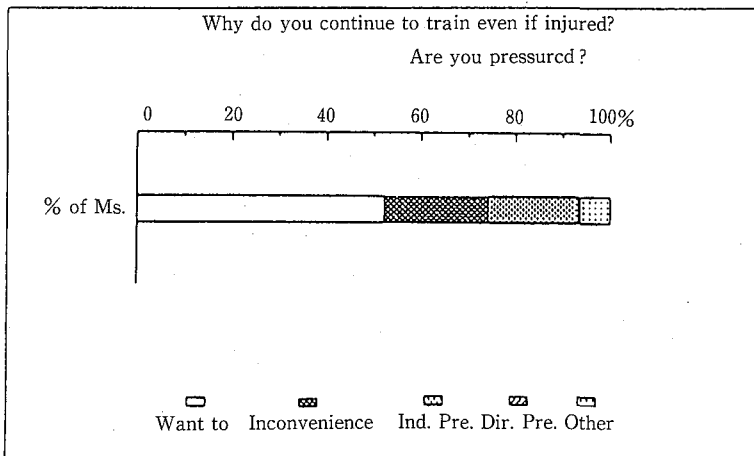


Fig. 3 Attitude to Injuries

Beginners

Fig. 4 shows that many beginners were dissatisfied with advice about clubs (36 beginners) and chances for trying out a club before joining (37 beginners). This increased the likelihood of beginners choosing a club inappropriate to their needs.

Fig. 5 shows the number of beginners who do not feel that they have been accepted by other members as a fully-fledged club member. 11.3% feel isolated from other members, and 17.9% feel a burden to other members.

Fig. 6 shows that some form of coaching geared to beginners' needs, perhaps similar to that offered in many U. K. universities, is widely called for. (70.8%)

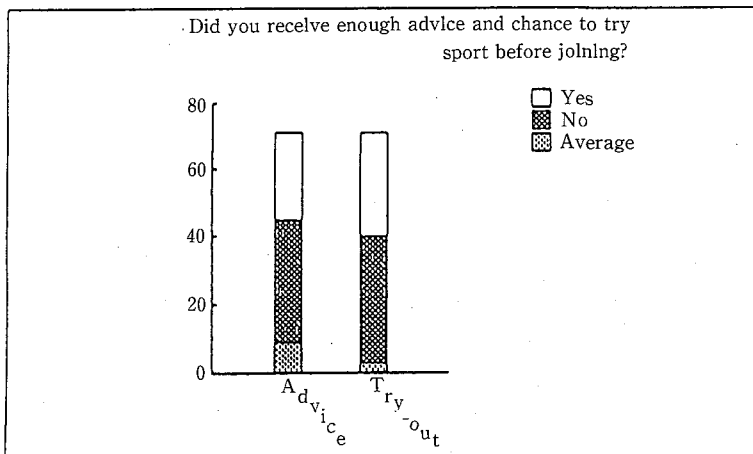


Fig. 4 Choosing a Club to Join

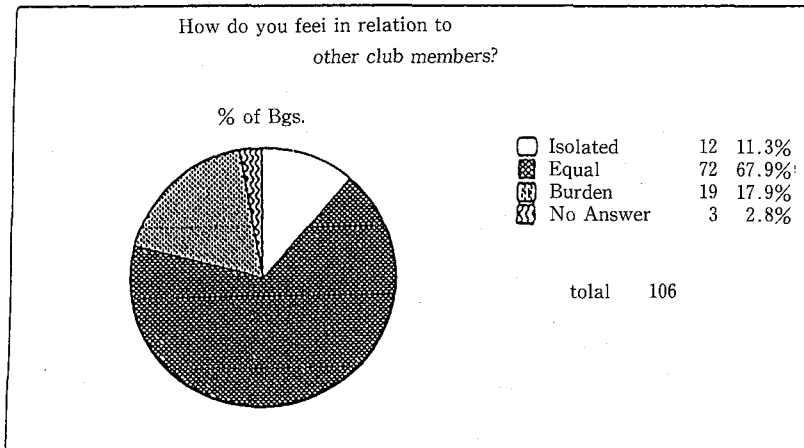


Fig. 5 Level of Integration into Club

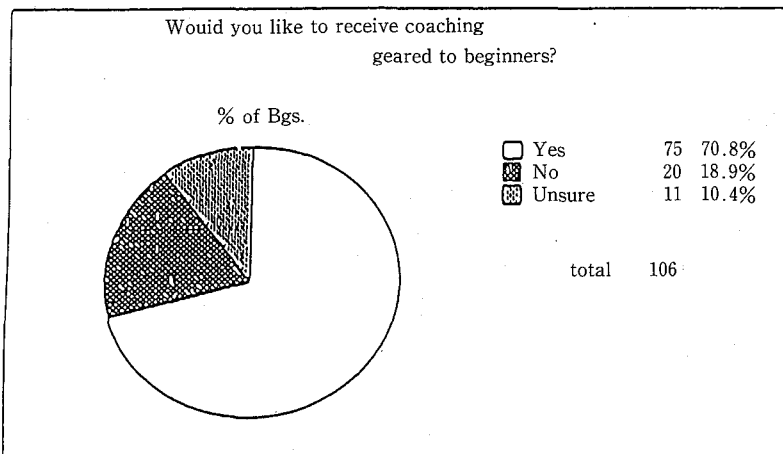


Fig. 6 Coaching for Beginners

Sport After Graduation

Fig. 7 shows that, although a large proportion of students intend to continue sporting activity after graduation, even if at a reduced level of intensity, as many as 15% feel that they will cease their participation in sport altogether.

Fig. 8 shows levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with provision of facilities for sporting involvement after graduation, 142 members saying that they feel they need more information concerning facilities and opportunities.

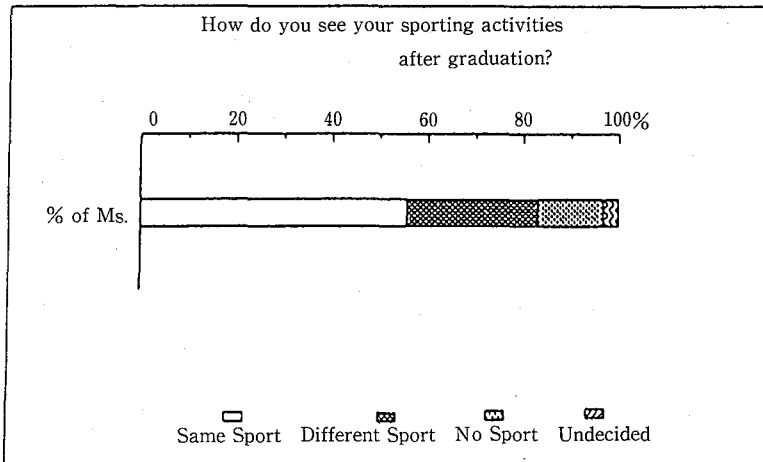


Fig. 7 Post-Graduation Sport

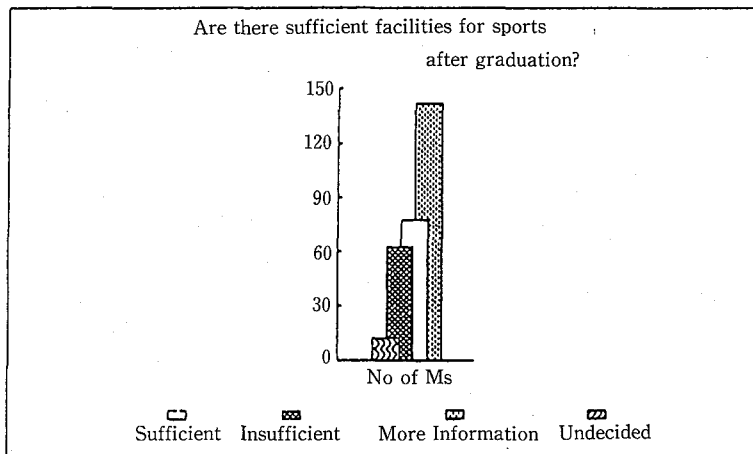


Fig. 8 Provision of Facilities

Discussion

I. Level of Competitiveness

1. Competition-Centred Training.

A visit to most university sports clubs in Japan is likely to reveal that their main focus is on achieving as high a level of performance as possible through regular, intensive training, and with the aim of competing successfully in the various regional university tournaments that occur throughout the year. There is little room for flexibility within this strict regime, and no matter what your level, sporting orientation or personal aspirations might be, on entering a club you are immediately confronted with this competitive atmosphere and heavy training schedule.

This focus may be appropriate for competitively-minded members of a relatively high

standard, for whom a major feature of sporting activity is the enjoyment gained through persevering together as a team, no matter how hard the training, and then achieving good results together as a team. However, not all club members fit into this category, and the questionnaires provide clear evidence that, for those members who joined a club with the motivation of enjoying participation in their chosen sport on a more informal basis, university sports clubs in their present state are too one-sided in their emphasis on preparation for high-level tournament play. (See Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) Furthermore, several members mentioned that they would not continue their involvement in sporting activities after graduation, or would tone it down considerably, because they felt that their bodies would no longer be able to take the strain of competition-centred training.

“Sport was too intensive at junior and senior high-school, so I think, (by the time I graduate from university), I’ll be exhausted physically and mentally.”

Another of the respondents was quite specific as to why he would be disinclined to continue his participation in sport after graduation. “Why is it that people stop participating? I think it’s to do with the fact that sport is tiring, it’s easy to injure yourself, it’s expensive and also because the concept of competition is very strong.”

It was highly surprising to read that many club members felt that, by the end of their four years participation in a university sports club, they would have reached the limit of their physical capabilities. At the age of 21! The above quotations are very revealing in that they suggest that many students leave university with the impression that all sporting activity consists of high-level, technical practice; hard, physical training; and the pressure of competition. They feel that they cannot keep up this intensity, and so tend to view university sport as four years of concentrated participation, and retirement from the club as the culmination of their sporting career. This attitude is a serious obstacle to the development of “Lifetime Sport”. During their time at university, students do not come into contact with a wide variety of sporting or recreational activity. Their experience is limited to one sport, and to one level of involvement.

2. Retiring from Clubs.

University sports clubs follow the example of schools in instituting a practice whereby members retire from the club six months to a year before they graduate. Reasons given are preparation for important examinations, or concentration on graduation theses. Such a system, however, again promotes the idea that all sport is of an intensive nature and cannot be undertaken more spontaneously, on an irregular basis. It runs contrary to the assertion currently being promoted by advocates of the “Lifetime Sport” movement, that one of the major benefits of physical exercise is that it is an excellent way to relieve stress, and refresh both the body and mind. A more flexible club structure, which catered for various levels of involvement, would enable members to avoid the extreme case of retiring fully from club activities, participating, instead, less intensively, when time permitted.

3. Injuries

Club members' attitudes to injuries is further evidence that the intensity of participation that seems to prevail in university clubs is a major obstacle in the growth of "Lifetime Sport". Results of the questionnaires suggest a tendency to push people beyond their physical limits, resulting in over-exertion and therefore injuries. It is rather frightening to see, during club practices, the number of people who continue to play although hobbling or regularly grimacing with pain; or to see the amount of pain-killing spray that is applied unthinkingly, and as a matter of course.

The reason for this failure to pay sufficient heed to one's body's limits lies, I believe, in the emphatic focus of clubs on preparation for competition. (See Fig. 3)

For "Lifetime Sport" to take root in Japanese society, it is a vital prerequisite that all individuals be more fully aware of their physical strengths and weaknesses, and of the types of exercise to which they are physically most suited. If this is achieved, then everyone is in a position to undertake a form of exercise that will be both enjoyable and of benefit to them, with a minimal risk of injury.

Students may feel that, as they are still young, their bodies can tolerate a certain level of abuse, and come to think of injuries as part and parcel of a competition-oriented sports club which must be endured. This, however, leads not only to bad habits, whereby the students never learn to be aware of their own limitations; but can also result in more chronic injury which, in extreme cases, might preclude an individual from participation in sporting activity at any level in the future.

Members of university sports clubs need to be more sensitive to their own and to other members' abilities and fitness levels. As many club members will be the sports coaches and instructors of the future, it is particularly important that they learn to take a wider view of sport, and move away from placing priority on "winning at all costs".

The problems outlined above present a good argument for the proposal that university sport in Japan should move away from a hard-sport type to a soft-sport type, where, in the words of Teruko Oonuki, a well-known long-distance swimmer, hard-sport is defined as; "giving priority to the achievement principle. (ie. becoming Olympic Champion etc.); and soft-sport refers to; "a freely-chosen culture in line with your personal circumstances and interests, where the crux is the pleasure principle."²⁾

University sports clubs at the moment, concentrating as they do on preparation for competition, are still far-removed from this definition of "freely-chosen culture" and "pleasure principle", for all members. They need to provide a wider variety of sporting experience, so that each individual might find an activity suited to their interests and abilities. The key is variety; variety of sport, and also variety of participation. This, of course, is not easy to achieve, and, ideally, requires considerable resources in the shape of enthusiastic volunteers and qualified coaches. If university sports clubs are to make a valuable contribution to the development of "Lifetime Sport", however, they need to adopt a more flexible attitude to that which is

currently in evidence.

I. Beginners

The above discussion described the competitive orientation of most sports clubs at Kanazawa University. It is easy to imagine that a strong emphasis on high-level training and preparation for competition is particularly inappropriate for beginners.

For the "Lifetime Sport" movement to grow effectively, it is vital that newcomers to sport and recreation be encouraged, so that the sporting population continues to increase. The questionnaires revealed, however, that the current structure of university sport leaves much to be desired in this respect.

1. Choosing a Club.

68% of beginners in sports clubs at Kanazawa University were undecided as to which club they would join when they first entered the university. Many felt, however, that there was insufficient information provided to help them make an appropriate choice of club; and that they would have liked more opportunity to observe clubs, or participate on a temporary basis, before making their final decision. (See Fig. 4)

From the viewpoint of "Lifetime Sport", everyone must be treated as an individual, for everyone's strengths and interests differ. Furthermore, sport is not just about the physical activity itself, but is closely linked to such factors as level of intensity, and motivation of fellow participants. For a student to choose a club, therefore, simply because they have a vague idea that they would enjoy that particular sport, is no guarantee that the club will, in fact, prove suitable.

Responses to the beginners' questionnaire showed that, where adequate information is supplied, prospective members are able to make informed decisions and, having joined, are more likely to be satisfied with their sporting experience at the club. All university sports clubs should endeavour, then, to provide more accurate and detailed information about their activities. This is particularly important for minor sports such as rowing and folk-dancing. If less popularised sports grow in status and manage to increase their participation rate, this will provide a major boost for the development of "Lifetime Sport".

2. Providing the Correct Environment

Although the majority of beginners (83%) felt that they were warmly welcomed into their new club, and club captains stressed that beginners, as long as they were enthusiastic and willing, were indeed welcome, a closer investigation reveals a marked contradiction.

Several beginners stated that they feel isolated from other members, or see themselves as a burden to the club. (See Fig. 5) Furthermore, as the atmosphere in most clubs is competitive, with practice and training concentrating on the requirements of the high-level players, beginners commonly feel that they get in the way if they cannot keep up, and that they stand out if they get left behind in fitness training. They feel under pressure to progress as quickly as

possible, and experience frustration and a sense of inferiority if they are unable to do so. A typical claim by a beginner was; "The fact that I'm always at the bottom of the club gives me a sense of inferiority."

These are not the kind of pressures or emotions that a beginner should be experiencing during their early encounters with a sport. Certain observers might claim that beginners make rapid progress in the university sports club environment. Naturally, if a beginner is thrust into a practice and training routine geared towards high-level players, then a certain amount of progress will inevitably be made, as a result of the pressures outlined above, and because of the regularity of practices. However, progress in this sense is defined as reaching, as quickly as possible, a level so that you no longer interfere with the normal practice procedure. Insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that beginners acquire the correct basic skills or level of physical fitness. Bad habits are ignored as long as the beginner is managing to somehow keep up. In the future, however, these bad habits and unpolished technique may well lead to frustrations, if not also causing aggravated injuries. Such a scenario is, of course, far removed from the ideals of "Lifetime Sport".

For "Lifetime Sport" to achieve successful growth, it is vital that beginners be able to practise and achieve their goals at their own pace. If they feel rushed, they can soon lose their enthusiasm for the sport.

3. Providing Suitable Instruction.

The beginners themselves are of the opinion that what is most lacking is suitable instruction. Captains, on the other hand, claim that the custom of senior members offering advice and instruction to junior members is an effective form of coaching. Again, however, the reality is rather different. These senior club members have no coaching qualification, and are perhaps unfamiliar with the specific problems faced by a beginner. In addition, each player has a different technique, and their own individual views on how the game should be played. Beginners are provided, then, with no easily-comprehended or easily-assimilated constant to which to refer, at a time when they are most in need of good instruction.

Most British universities offer a system of sports coaching, where the instructors are qualified, and receive payment from the university. 71% of beginners questioned at Kanazawa University expressed a desire to receive this kind of coaching, specifically geared to their needs. (See Fig. 6) To institute a replica system would take time and is perhaps unnecessary. If, instead, some way could be found of involving instructors qualified under the scheme promoted by the Japanese Ministry of Education and the Japan Amateur Sports Association, then beginners could enjoy a more standardised level of instruction, thus paving the way for on-going, fruitful participation in their chosen sport.

III. Foreign Students

"Lifetime Sport" is an important part of the wider concept of "Lifetime Learning". "Lifetime Learning" encompasses all aspects of life and socialisation, but one major element is

a striving towards increased communication. This may be communication between parents and their children, or within the local community, to build greater community spirit. In this age of internationalisation, however, it also means endeavouring to increase communication, and therefore harmony, between countries and people of different nationalities.

On this level, one of the most valuable assets is sport, as sport is practised in all countries, usually to a common set of rules, and does not, therefore, require fluency in a foreign language for people of different nationalities to participate together. Sport is truly an international language.

It is very surprising to learn, then, that only four clubs at Kanazawa University have foreign students among their members, the total number amounting to no more than six people, there being no foreign student members in clubs of such internationally popular sports as soccer, tennis or basketball. Three main reasons can be discerned for the lack of internationalisation of university sports clubs in Japan.

1. Arriving Mid-year.

Many foreign students from European countries or the United States arrive in Japan in September, the middle of the academic year. They therefore miss out on the introductory week that takes place in April, when clubs welcome newcomers into their ranks. Many students, having just arrived in Japan, lack the necessary language skills to make inquiries for themselves about how to join a club. Even if they were fairly proficient, they might still lack the confidence to turn up at a club in the middle of its season, and ask if they might join.

2. Senior-Junior Relations.

A second reason is the rigidity of senior-junior relations which exist in university sports clubs in Japan. Arriving in September means being out of line with other members by six months, thus making it difficult to fit in to the strict hierarchy which pays such close attention to amount of time in the club, and completion of one's apprenticeship as subordinate.

The general rule in university sports clubs in Japan, is that you are treated as a first year, that is the lowest rung of the ladder, when you first join the club, no matter what your age or academic year. Thus foreign students of the age of, for example, 25, are faced with the prospect of having to join 18 year olds in performing all the club chores, with perhaps little opportunity to partake fully in the actual sporting activity itself. As many foreign students are only in Japan for one year, they cannot console themselves with the fact that circumstances will improve once they enter the second year.

3. Unappealing Reputation.

A final reason is definitely the fact that sports clubs have the widely-advertised reputation of being tough, expensive, and very strict in the area of senior-junior relations. Many foreign students who are used to a less rigid structure and more relaxed atmosphere at university clubs in their home country, are deterred by this image, and decide that, however much they want to

keep up their sporting activities, they cannot afford to commit themselves to such a rigorous regime.

These three reasons provide a powerful deterrent to foreign students joining a club. At a time when the number of foreign students is growing at a steady pace, and internationalisation, along with "Lifetime Sport" and "Lifetime Learning", are of major social importance, there should be greater effort to make the structure of university sports clubs more flexible, so that foreign students would feel confident that they could fit smoothly into a club, even if they are only in Japan for a short period, or are of a more advanced age than their fellow members. Regular members would then have the chance of communicating on an international level, whilst foreign students would settle more quickly into their new environment, enjoying a richer experience during their stay in Japan. Such a situation would go a long way to meeting the prerequisites of "Lifetime Sport" and "Lifetime Learning".

IV. Sport After Graduation

The whole focus of this study has been to investigate whether or not the experience to be had at university sports clubs prepares students for the challenge of continuing sporting activity throughout their lifetime, as contributors to the "Lifetime Sport" movement. With this in mind, an important aim of the questionnaires was to discover students' awareness of the "Lifetime Sport" issue, and their plans for sport after graduation.

It was found that the majority of students are at least familiar with the basic concepts of "Lifetime Sport", and agree with its purpose. The problem clearly lies, however, in bridging the gap between being aware of the theory whilst at university, and having the knowledge and motivation to put this theory into practice after graduation. Judging by responses to the questionnaire, students are poorly prepared for making this step.

1. Lack of Variety.

A large variety of sporting opportunity exists for students after graduation, especially with the efforts being put in by various bodies to promote "Lifetime Sport", and with the growth in popularity of minor sports and new sports.

Whilst at university, however, students are not made aware of this variety. They do not have the opportunity to participate in more than one sport, at varying levels of intensity, or of changing sports at any time. Instead, university sports clubs mostly emphasise short-term intensity, and only one level of participation, this, in the majority of cases, being competition-oriented. Students join a club and are expected to stay with that club for the full four years, it being very unusual to leave one club and join another.

2. Individual Initiative.

From a young age, all sporting activities in Japan are centred on school and university. A child's participation in sport is usually within the confines of a school or university sports club,

playing with members of a similar age within a constant environment. All facilities are provided, and there is a ready-made structure to fit into.

Such a monotony of experience does not encourage students in the belief that there are multiple sporting experiences to be had after university, as the member of a variety of clubs, for example, or of a club encompassing all ages and all abilities, over a range of sports. Nor does it help students to develop the initiative that will enable them to seek out new opportunities once they graduate, and leave behind the ready-made sporting structure.

Whilst at university, more students should take responsibility for their own participation, playing a significant role in organising their activities, and in ensuring the necessary facilities and equipment are available. If clubs fail to prepare students in this way, then it will prove particularly costly with the imminent advent of an ageing society in Japan, where the elderly find themselves with an unprecedented amount of leisure time, and yet without the practice or knowledge necessary for organising meaningful activities for themselves.

3. False Impressions.

15% of respondents to the questionnaires stated that they would cease participation in sporting activities after graduation (See Fig. 7), and the majority, in answer to a separate question, felt that they would cease competitive involvement, and would participate merely at a low-level, on an irregular basis. A variety of reasons were given, including that they felt that they would be too busy at work; that their body would no longer take the strain; that they would no longer be able to afford it financially; and that there were insufficient facilities or opportunities. (See Fig. 8)

These stated reasons give cause for concern, as they underline the argument that participation in university sports clubs can create the false impression that sport is all about expensive, time-consuming, competition-oriented activities, and that few facilities or opportunities exist outside educational establishments. The truth is that, in conjunction with efforts to develop "Lifetime Sport", new facilities are being built, as well as existing facilities being utilised more fully. Sports which are easy and inexpensive to implement, such as walking, jogging and cycling, are being promoted. Events such as the "Sports and Recreation Festival", and the "Olympics for the Elderly" have been created, where people of all ages can take part either competitively, or on a more recreational basis; and where sporting activities are combined with other cultural events such as fashion shows and art exhibitions.

It is certainly not the case, therefore, that graduation must bring with it a drastic reduction in sporting life, or that sport with an element of competition is necessarily restricted to one's student years. Great efforts are being made outside the educational field to provide the all-important variety of sporting experience, and it is vital that the younger generation be exposed to this variety as early as possible. University sports clubs in their present state are failing to do this, and must urgently consider how to remedy the situation. It may be the case, however, that if a more stabilised structure of sports clubs in the community is successfully introduced, where variety is a fundamental premise, then some of their work will be done for

them. This, though, should not absolve university clubs of their duty to consider more the individual needs of their members.

Conclusion

As I have mentioned, the scope of this study was too small to present a full picture of university sport throughout Japan. The results and discussion remain valid, however, in the sense that "Lifetime Learning" and "Lifetime Sport" are such major topics in Japan at the moment, and will surely remain so in the foreseeable future, so that any contribution to the debate must be of interest.

Further study could focus on the role that new sports might play in university sport; or on the position of the more recreational sports circles, as opposed to sports clubs, in the changing sporting structure. The important points of this study, however, are that it has been shown that clubs, faced with the challenge of "Lifetime Sport", are failing their members in a number of ways. Sporting activities are geared too heavily to the competent member who is also competitively-minded. There is too little variety for all members equally to enjoy a meaningful sporting experience, and one that will encourage them to pursue their sporting interests after graduation.

It is too early for university clubs to be expected to fulfil all requirements of the "Lifetime Sport" movement, but with their deficiencies once identified, and possible paths towards the ideal being described by various sources, there is now little excuse for university sports clubs in Japan not to make at least the first tentative steps in the right direction.

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