

# The Yearbook of the Finnish Society for Sports History 2021

*Pekka Kaarninen*

### **“It went a little wrong.”**

The downsides of competitive and bench sports in Juha ”Watt” Vainio’s hit Finland-Sweden

The article analyses the downsides of sport that emerged from the Finland-Sweden athletics match. The review will focus on Juha Vainio’s recording on a country match-themed hit called Finland-Sweden (1968). On the basis of this, it is examined how the humorously presented downsides of sport in the song are practically context-oriented at the time the song was recorded and, on the other hand, how the discourse was tied to a mildly sexist perspective, which also includes nationalistic emphasis. In this way, the values of sport, which reflect the pain points and downsides of sport. Due to the structure of the song, it is both a competitive sport and a bench sport. The hit will be associated with Juha Vainio’s career and the rise of Finnish social humor music in the 1960s, as well as, the importance and position of athletics in Finnish cul-

ture and for Finns. The background is also the rise of the importance of television as a mass media, which affected the visibility and popularity of both sports and hitters in the era when a new kind of celebrity culture came to light. By bringing out comical elements in the song about the ground match, Juha Vainio points out that a festive and important country match that maintains patriotism may not be a sublime and wonderful event, but is above all a low opportunity for common amusements.

*Hannu Itkonen & Seppo Knuutila*

### **“If you win, you win” –** The everlasting promises of sports rhetoric as actions and experiences.

Sports have always involved varying promises made and expressed by numerous parties. This article examines the promises within sports rhetoric and explores how these pledges are transformed and actualized in the lives of athletes. Besides myths and imagination, the promises of sport also entail possibilities of actualization. From ancient times to the present day, the athletes at the top have

been rewarded with significant monetary rewards, publicity and glory. Success also cultivates social and cultural capital, both of which remain profitable long past the end of athletes' sports careers.

The article's research data consists of texts describing the life stories of athletes, who have either quit in the 21<sup>st</sup> century or are still at the height of their sports career. The protagonists of the research are figure skater Kiira Korpi, footballers Jari Litmanen and Teemu Pukki, cross-country skiers Juha Mieto and Aino-Kaisa Saarinen, formula driver Kimi Räikkönen and ice-hockey player Teemu Selänne. The data was examined through the means of thematic reading where the promises and 'expressions of hope' directed towards athletes are identified. More than fifty units of text were gathered for further analysis – these units entailed either direct promises and expectations or mentions of prizes and money. The data was also categorized based on the parties expressing the promises. These parties were mainly identified as the athletes' families, immediate communities, sports organizations, media, the public and involved businesses. The expressions, through which the promises of sports discourse were built, repeated and transformed, were analyzed using the method of discursive data approach.

The athletes' biographies shed light on the varying promises they were given and the expectations they faced. Athletes are expected to follow the 'rules of the game' so that the promises made to them can actualize in the future, like they have for the athletes before their time. When athletes have

prospered and reclaimed the promises, their success slowly fading and careers coming to an end, there comes a time for new promises from new directions. Due to sports products, the media and markets becoming progressively intertwined, the promises of competitive sports are gaining even more influence and increasing financial leverages. The journey from minor awards to astronomical monetary prizes has been long, demanding, discriminatory and rewarding.

Sports promises are historical results of the times, places and the influential parties' interests at each era. In sports, as in life, all promises are not fulfilled, and their implications differ greatly depending on the positions and impacts of the involved parties. The modern promises of competitive sports are increasingly driven by financial motivations and ever-growing monetary prizes.

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*Lauri Kaira*

## **The Olympics spirit, protests and many disappointments** – Sailing at the 1936 Summer Olympics and the changing view of the yachting between the World Wars

This article aims to find out the experiences of Finnish yachtsmen in the Kiel Olympic regatta at the Berlin 1936 Summer Olympics. The article

is based on allegations made by Yngve Pacius, the most famous Finnish racing yachtsman of his time. In his memoirs, he wrote about the un-sportsmanlike nature of the Olympic regatta at Kiel and the questionable conduct of the race committee.

In this article, I try to find out whether the claims of Yngve Pacius's memoirs were true and how the issue was handled in the press in Finland? Was Kiel's Olympic regatta protest-filled and did fellow sailors, as well as the news press about the events share the thought that protests were unfair and even contrary to the nature of yachting? Through the history of Finnish Olympic sailing I try to identify the influence of the national background of the yachting and the yachtsmen. What kind of success was expected of yachtsmen and why?

Among Finnish yachtsmen, the Olympics were not rated as high as the competition for the Scandinavian Gold Cup. Despite this, the Olympics were considered to give a certain appreciation to the sport of yachting although other international regattas brought together more boats even in Finland. Before the Olympic regatta in Kiel, the Finns had won medals at yachting in previous years, but in the period between the Wars the Finns had taken part only in the dinghy classes.

Because of the pressure created by the other yachtsmen in Finland and the Finnish press, the expectation for an Olympic medal at least some classes were high in 1936. Following the poor success of the regatta, the Finns expressed criticisms towards the arrangement of the regatta and the

spirit of the yachting at the Olympic Games.

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*Sami Kolamo & Riikka Turttainen*

## **Women's tennis as a playing field for the struggles of gender equality**

– analysing the star images of Suzanne Lenglen, Billie Jean King and Serena Williams

Women's tennis has a long tradition in the struggles for gender equality. In the article we study three female tennis stars from the different eras. They are Suzanne Lenglen in the 1920s, Billie Jean King in the 1970s and Serena Williams whose career has lasted for the past twenty years. We define these sports mega stars as conjunctural athletes. Through their star images it is possible to understand, interpret and diagnose the social formation of the era, including its dominant forms and contradictions. In the article we ask: What kind of struggles Lenglen, King and Williams have fought for gender equality, and how these struggles have defined their star images? Methodically our analysis is based on close reading of historical accounts, biographies, documentary and social media texts.

Lenglen can be called as a sporty flapper who revolutionize the style of playing and dressing in women's

tennis. She acted as liberating force in the era in which the rules and style of Victorian society still affected women's daily life. Like Lenglen, also Billie Jean King emphasized the importance of professionalism. King was the most influential feminist-athlete in the 1970s. The establishment of the pro tour can be considered as her greatest achievement in women's tennis. Serena Williams has fought, in particular, for the rights of black women – also in developing countries. She has repeatedly spoken about improving the status of female athletes. In her activism for equality and non-discrimination, Williams has taken the advantage of social media. However, as the multiple othering of Williams indicates, there is still abundantly obstacles along the way to gender equality in the world of sport, as well as in society at large.

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*Jerkko Holmi*

## **Female body shapes or football scores** – The first years of Seinäjoen Mimmiliiga in local newspapers

Throughout the history female sports have been either completely banned or strictly controlled. Only few sport events were allowed for women before the 1950s. The sport journalism had also kept the female sports side-lined, presenting only the rare champions of allowed sports, and depicting great

female gymnastics events. The female figure in sport was also explicitly defined on feminine features.

In the 1970s the social transformation and emancipation of women paved the way for new sporting events to be allowed for females to compete. More variation was also introduced into how to define female figure in sports. One of the relieved sports for women was football. Multiple female football clubs were established in Finland in the 1970s. One of them was Seinäjoen Mimmiliiga (SeMi).

The article examines the reactions of local newspapers on the newly established club SeMi. At first the media coverage was bipartite: The reactions mainly included comical features due to the alleged lack of skill and fitness of players, and sexist language describing female footballer body parts and baring apparel of players. There were, however, some positive reactions too which can be described as excited reception of new female sporting event. The excitement and usage of condescending language were short-lived. In less than a year the female football became normalized, and the media coverage of SeMi reverted into mainly repeating the results of the previous games and short reports on the game events.

Jari Kanerva

## A Glance at Finnish Skiing Guides Before the Second World War

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of Finnish skiing guides before the Second World War. The first Finnish skiing guide, *Skiing Sports in Finland*, was published in 1891. With its content, it showed a direction for future ski guides. The content of the book focused on the manufacture of skis and the maintenance of equipment.

Later on the ski guides are a good description of the modernization and development of skiing. They emphasize the manufacture and maintenance of skis. This is linked to the fact that ski production depended on the local workshops and that extensive industrial production was not yet started. Another common denominator is that the guides paid little attention to training, as skiers came to competitions by skiing, then raced and after competition skied back home.

In the 1920s, racetracks were drawn to cross country, i.e. forests and hilly terrain, instead of ice. This prompted a reassessing of the instruments in the guides. Particular attention was paid to waxing, both in terms of slip and grip. new skiing culture brought to the guides alpine skiing techniques. In particular, the skiing propaganda of female gymnasts emphasized the versatile skiing skills that were ostra-

cized by the male skiing culture for a long time.

In Finnish skiing culture in the 1930s, the undulation of skiing sports began and gender equality started in sport culture, especially through women's gymnastics associations. Skiing became common sports activities in school sports and civil guard. Gymnastics ladies opened the winter route for winter tourism in Lapland, and together with the Finnish Tourist Association, they caused a mountain skiing effort that led to the strong development of Lapland tourism also during the winter.

In the ski guides published in Finland, the contents are repeated from book to book. They wanted to tell the original history of Finnish skiing, heroic stories and put skiing champions on a pedestal. After 1920s decade attention was focused on the health effects of skiing, the growing goals and, above all, the improvement of our country's defense capabilities through physical fitness and skiing skills.

*Tapio Roiko-Jokela & Heikki  
Roiko-Jokela & Esa Mangeloja*

### **Sobriety, Conservativeness, Guidance:**

The relationship between sports and alcohol consumption in the writings of the Finnish press from the late 1910s to the late 1980s

The attitudes of Finnish society and the sports world to the use of alcohol in sport changed the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The strict sobriety thinking of the early part of the century slowly receded from the 1960s onwards. Press writing followed the development of society, but not in a straightforward way.

The press can be seen to have a conservative attitude to alcohol consumption in sport. However, the change in social attitudes was reflected in the press, but the tone of the writings changed slowly. It can be considered that society shaped the values of the press, and not the other way around.

Although the press maintained a conservative view of alcohol consumption in the sporting world compared to the rest of the liberalised society, changes in the press's alcohol consumption in sport discourse can be observed over different decades. From the beginning of Finland's independence until the late 1950s, the press supported the concept of a sober athlete and put pressure on athletes to

follow the ideal of sobriety. As society and the sporting world became more liberalised and the climate of attitude is changing, the press discourse came out in support of old sobriety ideals and a minor change occurred during the 1980s when a critical but guiding writing style was adopted in place of the judgmental tone.

*Jouko Kokkonen*

### **If an athlete drinks?**

In my article I will discuss the relationship between sport and alcohol as part of Finnish alcohol consumption regulation and customary culture from the 1920s to 2010s through the biographies of six Finnish male athletes. These athletes are long-distance runner Ville Ritola, javelin thrower Tapio Rautavaara, footballer Arto Tolsa, hill jumper Matti Nykänen, javelin thrower Tero Pitkämäki and wheelchair racer Leo-Pekka Tähti.

I analyse the relationship of these internationally merited athletes to alcohol use, and the difficulties that may arise during and after a sports career because of alcohol abuse from the individual and social points of view. Changes in attitudes, legislation and social factors have affected the alcohol consumption of Finnish athletes. In Finland, alcohol has been a significant symbol of social freedom. Four alcohol policy periods can be found in Finland:



1. The rise and fall of Prohibition Act (1919–1939)
2. The period of gradual loosening control of drinking (1939–1968)
3. The period of increased alcohol availability and consumption (1969–1994)
4. Alcohol, sports and increasing professionalism (1995–)

The basis of my analysis lay on the turning points of Finnish alcohol policy, which have been linked to wider social changes. Changes in alcohol policy have both directed the debate on the relationship between sport and alcohol and influenced practices. Athletes' alcohol use has traditionally been condemned by the sports organizations in public, but in practice, attitudes have been more permissive.

The attitude climate has changed substantially in the 21st century. Alcohol use by athletes is no longer considered absolutely reprehensible morally. On the other hand the professionalisation of sport and the change of the media have led athletes to rethink their relationship to alcohol. Athletes have to for example think how to behave in public from the point of view sponsorship agreements.

The spectrum of alcohol attitudes has widened. Sober athletes have become real role-models but also moderate alcohol use is tolerated. On the other hand attitudes towards heavy drinking have turned negative. From a historical point of view, this change tells of the weakening of the power of traditional masculine drinking habits in sports.

*Esa Mangeloja  
& Heikki Roiko-Jokela  
& Tapio Roiko-Jokela*

## **Demand factors for hockey entertainment**

The provision of professional hockey entertainment requires massive ticket revenues. As players' salaries have reached soaring heights, the stands in the ice rinks must be filled from one night to the next. This study explores some significant demand factors for hockey that can be considered to affect the public's willingness to buy tickets to hockey matches.

In Finland, the liberalisation of alcohol culture is also visible in ice hockey spectators. From the point of view of event organisers, consuming alcoholic beverages is a very profitable business. A hockey match allows alcohol consumption, without social tensions. In Finland, economic considerations do not seem to affect the number of viewers of ice hockey. Similarly, according to the findings of this study, changes in the occurrence of violence have no impact on ratings. On the other hand, the increase in serving alcohol attracts audiences to the stands, as drinking alcohol seems to increase comfort at sporting events.

The evenness of the match event also affects the interest of the audience. Hockey spectators pay for their tickets to see their favorite team win in a tight and exciting matchup. At the

opera, viewers know the libreto in advance and the outcome of the drama is no surprise to anyone. By contrast, the charm of a hockey match is based on the unpredictability of the outcome. The winner of the match will not be known until 60 minutes; it might be even after the possible overtime and winning goal race.

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*Johanna Nordling*

## **When football built a bridge**

The German top team Borussia Mönchengladbach played against the national team of Israel in Tel Aviv on February 25th 1970. After this football match the difficult and ice cold relations between West-Germany and Israel were suddenly much warmer than before. But why? What happened?

The friendly match was initiated by the two coaches of the teams, Hennes Weisweiler and Emanuel Schaffer. They knew each other from the sports school of Cologne and were good friends.

Both governments of Israel and of West-Germany supported the idea of the game, saw it as a welcomed gesture of friendship. Still the game was to be cancelled, as many Palestinian terror attacks of February 1970 horrified the players, who didn't want to fly. The Chancellor of West-Germany, Willy Brandt, decided to give the

team a military plane with military pilots to fly them to Israel, although that was strictly against the laws at the time. Israel agreed to let the plane land.

Borussia travelled to Tel Aviv and played the match in a full Bloomfield stadium with 22 000 people. They won 6:0. The Israeli spectators were amazed of how beautifully and skillfully the Germans played. They celebrated the team, even carried the players on their shoulders.

Back then and still today this match is seen as a turning point in the relations between the two countries. The old image of the Nazi Germany was replaced with a new image of a modern Germany and especially Hennes Weisweiler became a very popular person in Israel.