

# Pro 'career' real goal of system Squeaker

The flavour is distinctly British, but the application is universal. And the situation is prophetic.

Sir John Gielgud, in the role of a Cambridge University administrator, is chiding amateur athlete Harold Abrahams in a scene from the film "Chariots of Fire," a true story about the 1924 British Olympic running squad.

"Here at Cambridge, we've always been proud of our athletic prowess," he declares in his most stoic Shakespearian manner. "We believe — we have always believed — that our games are indispensable in helping to complete the education of an Englishman."

"They create character, they foster courage, honesty and leadership — but most of all, an unassailable spirit of loyalty and comradeship, and mutual responsibility."

Gielgud tells Abrahams that his attitude and methods of training are in conflict with these ideals. The alleged offense? The sprinter has violated the spirit of the amateur code by engaging a professional coach to prepare him for the Paris games.

The British Olympic committee looked on the situation with such disfavor that the coach, Sam Mussabini, had to watch his athlete win the 100-meter

dash from an apartment overlooking the stadium.

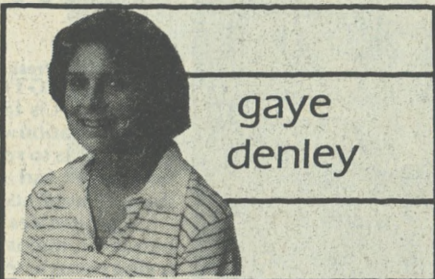
Things certainly have changed. It's hard to imagine new Aggie head coach Jackie Sherrill — now the highest paid professional in American higher education at \$267,000 a year — discreetly watching football games next season from the top of Rudder Tower.

Perhaps Abrahams' dilemma was one of the first cracks in a gap that has continued to widen over the last 60 years — the gap between the ideals summed up by Gielgud and the reality of today's para-professional collegiate athletics.

The two latest developments in the trend: first, the hiring of Sherrill at a price that, even adjusted for inflation, would have appalled the 1924 British committee, and second, a January federal court decision that, in effect, did away with the idea of student athletes and introduced the notion of athlete students.

The latter incident forced the University of Minnesota to loosen its policies so an academically deficient star guard, Mark Hall, could continue to play basketball for the school. The judge ruled that Hall's protected interest is in playing basketball, which will prepare him to be drafted by a professional team.

In accordance with the decision, the



university was forced to design a special major to match Hall's credits — play-ground-recreational activities.

Such has the system evolved. Sports, both amateur and professional, have reached a prominence that past Olympians would have never imagined. Athletics reign alongside television as the most popular form of entertainment in this country. Star athletes are likely to make more money than doctors, businessmen and some politicians.

It is only natural, then, that the college arena has become the training ground for professional careers. And the increased competitiveness that has accompanied the rise of athletics has pushed college sports closer and closer to the professional system.

It's time to align illusion with reality. Since college athletics can no longer reasonably fit into the "extra-curricular" role they were assigned decades ago, perhaps it is time to make them "curricular."

The Texas A&M Athletic Department, for example, would become the Department of Athletics. Dean Jackie Sherrill presiding.

A student like Hall could pursue a degree in basketball, or coaching, or physical education, which would become a part of the new department.

A player who spends a season on a team could sit out of classes for that season and receive credit for the experience as a University-approved co-op plan. Classes in coaching, strategy, first aid, teamwork and football fundamentals would be normal, three-credit-hour course options.

College athletes would be better prepared for professional careers, since they would major in their real chosen fields.

If the whole idea seems ludicrous, there's another alternative, however unlikely — that of restoring amateur sports to their original places as character-building, yet extra-curricular interests.

Gielgud's Cambridge man would be proud.

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officials ruled it no good because they said Aggie center Rudy Woods had stepped into the lane.

Joe Copeland brought the Bears within two points on a 15-foot jumper with 1:18 left, and it appeared that Woods' mistake would give Baylor the break it needed.

No one could explain the call after the game. Metcalf, Woods and Baylor coach Jim Haller were mystified.

Metcalf said: "That's just a new interpretation that hasn't gotten to College Station yet."

Woods, who scored only seven points but added a game-high 13 rebounds, didn't believe he had committed a lane violation.

"I don't know," Woods said. "He (the official) said I was on the line, but I don't think so. I know I've got 'big feet,' but I don't think I was on the line."

Lewis' free throw gave the Aggies a three-point lead, and Teagle's final basket of the night wasn't enough. When Roberts

received the in-bounds pass from Lewis, he covered the ball and allowed the final two seconds to expire.

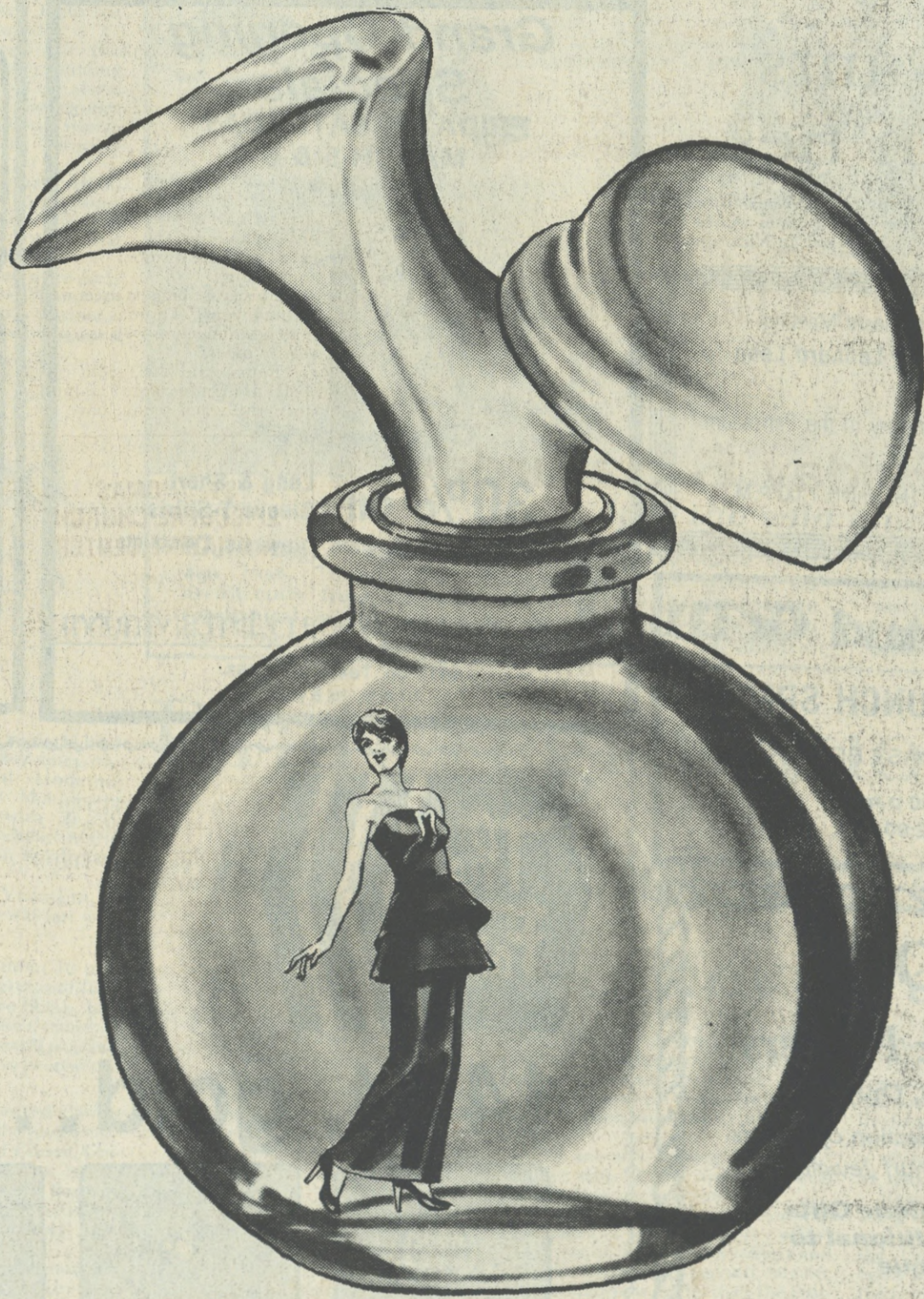
Roberts finished with 14 points, Naualls had 10 and Woodley had eight. For Baylor, Copeland had 14 points and center Ozell Hall had 10 points.

The Aggies, who out-rebounded the Bears 36-33, shot 46 percent from the floor. Baylor hit 45 percent of its field goals and 65 percent of its free throws.

Texas A&M shot only 62 percent from the line.

Woodley said: "This was an unusual game. Everybody was trying to execute perfectly and they were watching what they were doing rather than just going out and playing."

Even if Texas A&M doesn't qualify for an NCAA post-season berth, it is almost assured of a spot in the National Invitational Tournament. If the Aggies do not receive an NCAA invitation, they probably will open the NIT at home Wednesday.




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