

Olympics leaves surplus not debts

The Summer Olympics are only memories now. Mary Lou Retton's 10 on the vault. Mary Decker's fall in the 10,000 meter.

In most recent Olympic Games another memory lingered long after the athletic performances became statistics. This memory — a huge Olympic debt — left a bad aftertaste in the mouths of the host countries. But the hosts of the 1984 Summer Olympics have no such taste in their mouths.

The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee announced a surplus of \$150 million. The surplus was about 10 times more than originally projected by the organizing committee. Before the games opened the \$15 million surplus seemed more a pipe dream than a possible achievement.

Soviet bloc countries criticized the LA games as being a commercial exploitation of Olympic ideals. But the Canadian government — which lost more than \$1 billion at the 1976 Summer Games — surely would have benefitted from some of this crass commercialism.

Crass commercialism served the Olympics well.

The games were the first that were privately financed. The Olympics were staged — except for the security budget — without the use of government aid. Amateur athletes across the United States will benefit from this surplus; the money being split between the U.S. Olympic Committee and the Amateur Athletic Foundation. Some money may even make its way to the Third World nations that participated in the games.

With the \$150 million surplus on the books, the members of the Los Angeles Olympic Committee can hold their heads high and say to the world: "Capitalism works."

— The Battalion Editorial Board

Let the '84 debates be truly debatable

DAVID BRODER

Washington Post Columnist

WASHINGTON — Journalists have no business trying to stage-manage any aspect of the campaign we are covering. That's obvious. But it is also well-understood that rules are meant to be broken, and this is one I want to break.

I plead indulgence to make the case to those now negotiating the terms and conditions of the 1984 presidential debates that they be real debates — and not modified joint press conferences. Specifically, I urge that, rather than have journalists question the candidates, the candidates question each other.

This is a case where the architectural doctrine of "less is more" surely applies. The voters are interested in seeing Ronald Reagan face off against Walter F. Mondale and George Bush against Geraldine A. Ferraro. Anything — or anybody — that distracts from this natural focus of attention, who clutters up the stage, ought to be removed.

There is a function for a moderator who introduces the candidates, explains the ground rules and enforces them by calling time on an overly lengthy answer, for example.

But beyond that, there is nothing to be done that cannot be done by the candidates themselves. All four of these individuals are experienced public servants, familiar with the issues and well aware of their differences with their opponents.

There is no basis at all for believing that they cannot put their own cases, and challenge their opponents' contentions, as well as anyone in the world.

In terms of drama and viewer interest, the experience of the Democratic primary debates argues powerfully for eliminating the interlocutors of the press. The best moments — the ones that crackled — in those debates came when the candidates questioned each other and responded directly to each other.

In most of those debates, there was but a single moderator on-stage, and in the critical exchanges, that person played no part. John Glenn and Mondale talked directly to each other in New Hampshire; Mondale challenged Gary Hart almost nose-to-nose in Atlanta; Jesse Jackson lectured both his rivals on their behavior in New York, all without a word or a gesture from the moderator.

I can think of only two possible objections to carrying over this healthy habit into the autumn debates. Some might contend that it is beneath the dignity of these worthies to engage in this direct sort of verbal confrontation. I can imagine some Republican strategist saying

that "nice guy" Reagan should not be put in the position of asking Mondale to justify his public support of the Carter grain embargo while he privately thought it foolish. Even more easily, I can imagine some Republican saying that Bush should not be placed in the position of "attacking a lady," by being forced to question Ferraro himself.

On the other side, I can imagine some Democrat worrying that Mondale might appear disrespectful of the office of President if he questioned Reagan too vigorously, or that Ferraro might look strident and "un-ladylike" if she pressed Bush on his "voodoo economics" remark.

None of these protocol arguments carries weight. This is not a Washington dinner party we are discussing; it is a debate. And, as the old saying goes, if you can't take the heat, get out of the studio.

Nor is there much merit in the argument that the candidates will not raise all the issues that journalists might ask. During the Democratic debates, we learned that the question asked — or omitted — tells you as much about the questioner and his motives as the answer given — or evaded — tells you about his rival.

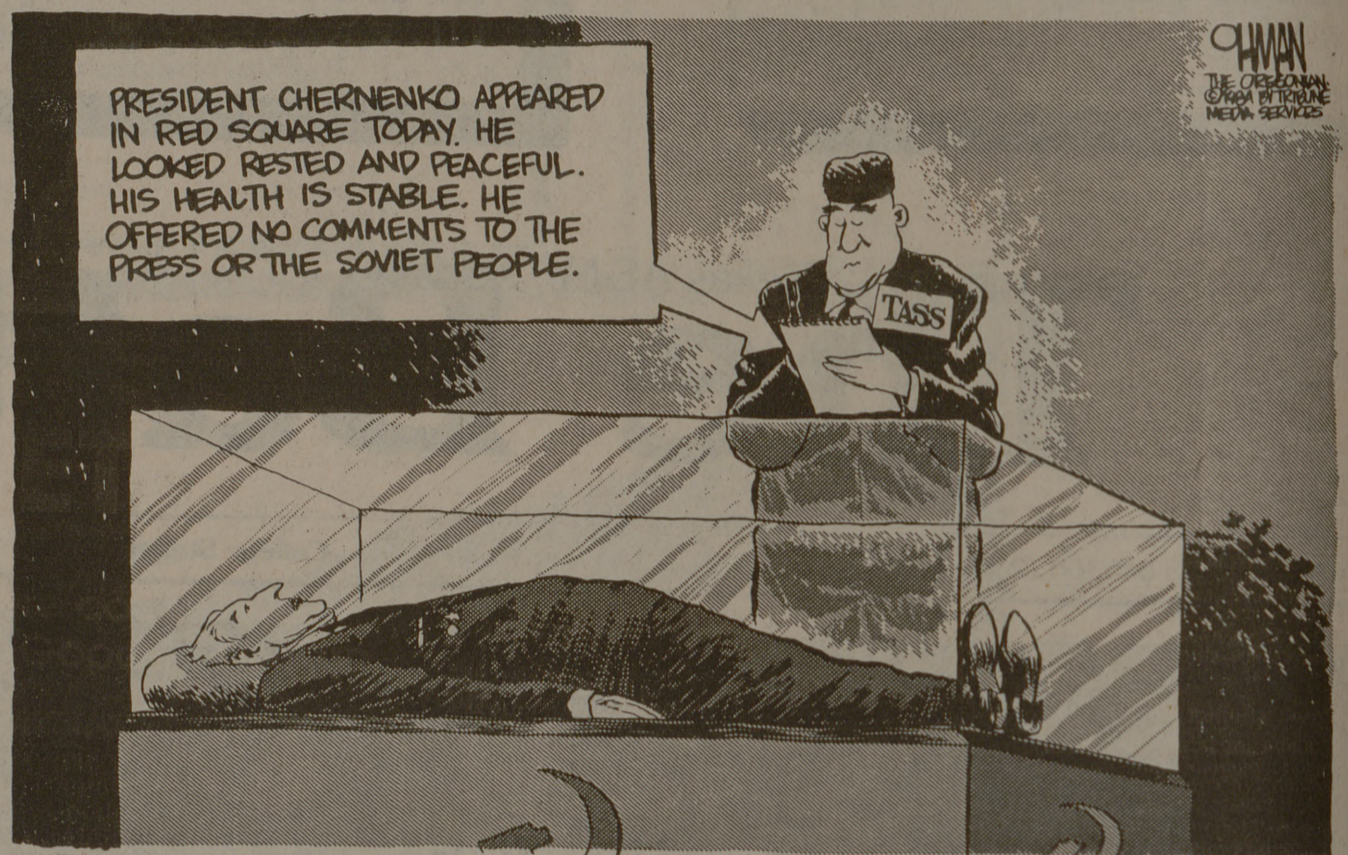
As a voter, I am intrigued to guess what issues Reagan would raise with Mondale, and vice-versa, knowing that only a few topics can be covered and that millions of voters are watching and making up their minds. That would tell us much more than we could possibly learn by watching them struggle with the question on Afghanistan from the New York Times or on comparable pay from the Sacramento Bee.

And now that I have mentioned, hypothetically, some of my colleagues, let me confess my final reason for hoping that the candidates will debate — really debate — this year. I think those stages and studios are bad places for us as journalists to be. There is no professional criticism intended of those reporters who have served on these panels. Their questions have been good, their attitude and demeanor thoroughly impartial.

But there is no escaping that every time we do that job, we inject ourselves in the campaign — into the central event of the campaign — and become players, not observers. Whether the question impales a candidate or offers him escape from the tight corner of the previous exchange, we are affecting history, not just writing its first draft.

To my fellow journalists, I would say: Let's play on our own ground, and insist that all these candidates, including the President, have frequent news conferences during the campaign.

But let the debates be debates.



LETTERS

More comment on Goodrich death

EDITOR:

Up to this point I have refrained from commenting formally on the Bruce Goodrich incident because I know it is fraught with controversy and my input might only aggravate matters. However, I feel several misrepresentations of the facts by Mr. Swearingen (Sept. 10 Battalion editorial page) should be corrected.

I know that Bruce Goodrich's death has not been forgotten by any Aggie, much less the officials in charge of the Corps of Cadets. Several steps have already been taken to ensure that such a tragedy will never occur again.

First, the commanding officer of each outfit is required to obtain a medical record of every cadet in the outfit. Thus, unforeseen medical problems will be avoided.

Secondly, all runs must be approved by the outfit advisor who is a commissioned officer in the military. Thirdly, the guard room will obtain the humidity rating and temperature several times daily and flags will be posted on the uniform block indicating weather inappropriate for exercise.

Also, the only disciplinary action allowed among cadets will be punitive physical training with a limit of twenty-five push-ups. Another new measure is the appointment of a cadet to oversee physical training. His sole responsibility is to ensure that any special cases will build physical stamina slowly and safely on individualized programs. Finally, no cadet will be encouraged to run beyond his capabilities. Whenever a cadet feels fatigued he may simply drop out of the run. I feel these new standards will more than secure the safety of our cadets.

I would also like to caution any critics of the Corps who make the mistake of confusing an honorable institution and

time-honored traditions with a few members' mistakes.

Helen Miller

Underwood Hall

This letter was accompanied by 53 other signatures.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The question is not if new procedures will be adopted, rather if all the rules will be enforced. The "crap out" that killed Cadet Bruce Goodrich was against the Corps' own rules.

Individuals more important than group

EDITOR:

I'm sure that, since the death of Bruce Goodrich, hazing has all but stopped, but everyone knows that hazing will never completely end at A&M. It's too much a part of the Corps tradition to stop forever; so, for when it returns, let me give you this advice:

The whole purpose of hazing is to give you a sense of school spirit; that is, a sense of identity with the Corps. That school spirit, in itself, is fine; hazing is just plain silly. What happened in the case of Bruce Goodrich is that he allowed school spirit to become more important than himself; that is, he let the Corps push him beyond his physical limits. When hazing returns to A&M, DON'T let school spirit become more important than your personal health. Know your limits; and, when you reach those limits, stop.

No matter what any upperclassman tells you, the individual is always more important than any group or institution. Never let anyone convince you otherwise and act accordingly.

Stacy Powers
Class of '86

The Battalion
USPS 045 360

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In memoriam

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