

Nicholas Von Hoffman

Olympic Committee: holding back money?

EUGENE, Oregon — The on-the-field performances by the athletes have been considered superb; but the off-the-field doings by the U.S. Olympic Committee running these pre-Munich tryouts here are spectacular in their own way too.

The fans who come to watch our best track and field men are a sophisticated group. Not your ordinary enthusiastic sports ignoramus. They do their speculating with charts, record books and stop watches, but they would need more than such simple equipment to find out what the committee is doing with the millions of dollars it has collected by panhandling from the American public.

The non-Panhellenic question of money and who's getting it first flew up here a few days ago when a high jumper accused two German track shoes manufacturers, Puma and Adidas, of paying their athletes to wear their respective products. One runner resolved this commercial competition by wearing an Adidas sneaker on his right foot and a Puma on his left.

Sneakers and sweat shirts

These revelations startled nobody familiar with big-time athletics, although they may have given the public the incorrect idea that large payoffs in track and field are common. In truth the most that 90 per cent of the competitors can hope for here is a free pair of sneakers

from Mr. Adidas or a cheap sweat shirt with Mr. Puma's name on it.

All the men who've come to Oregon have had to raise their own money to get here; the U.S. Olympic Committee doesn't pay their transportation. Nor does it pay their room and board while they are trying out, so that those without the necessary \$13 a day are sleeping on dorm floors and eating hamburgers at McDonalds... not exactly the healthy training regimen that "olympic athlete" suggests. But don't think that the U.S. Olympic Committee doesn't have the money. In addition to the eight to ten million dollars it is raising this year, the committee also has "a few" million dollars invested in stocks and bonds. Clifford Buck, the committee's top man, doesn't know exactly how many millions, but he says he needs every dime of it because it is "a matter of insurance against such hard times as the rock bottom we had in 1929."

Counting television revenues, it would appear that the committee has upwards of \$15 million to spend or invest in 1972. Buck is evasive about how that money is disposed of or even how it is raised or how much it costs to raise it. Somewhere between 8 cents and 13 cents on the dollar; he can't or won't be more precise. Likewise, he denies the published report that he is sending 477 athletes and a remarkable total of 167 non-playing officials, administrators and sports

bureaucrats to Munich. He won't, however, say how many are going. He and his staff have variously advanced the figures of 140, 130, and 112. There is no budget breakdown available here from the committee's officials. When asked how much money the committee actually has, Buck's public relations man told the press it might possibly find out by inquiring at, of all the odd places, the office of the chairman of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. So send in your money and then go whistle.

An okay from congress

It has also come out that Buck and his committee are selling the use of the Olympic's name to various corporations for \$25,000 a throw. Again, Buck doesn't know how many, but he thinks it's between 30 and 40. In any case, Maypo, "the hot cereal with a purpose" is entitled to claim it has been "selected by the U.S. Olympic Committee." Among the many other products that have undergone a similarly rigorous process of selection are Rexall Super Plenamins, Bank of America travelers checks, Emerson TV, Coppertone, Brut by Faberge, International Harvester, and Rise shaving cream, which has the committee's seal on its can. Arrid extra-dry has also been selected, but it's not clear whether our athletes are expected to squirt the competing products under each arm or alternate them daily.

Mr. Buck and his committee alone are entitled to make endorsements like this because in 1950 Congress passed a law giving them a legal lock on the Olympic name. What makes all of this yet stranger still is that Buck is a retired executive of the Wilson Sporting Goods Company. He denies owning stock but admits that he's still on their payroll with a pension—which makes you wonder if the righteous amateur furor being raised against Puma and Adidas is because they may be giving money to athletes or because they're trying to break into a merchandise promotion monopoly.

Instead of answers to questions of these kinds, all you can get out of the officials here are statements asserting that whatever they do is for the good of athletics and American youth. Now you would think that these sports businessmen would at least buy their unpaid youthful athletic employees a meal. Forget about the Olympic spirit of amateurism, forget about reimbursing the runners for their expenses or for time away from their jobs, how about three squares a day.

No? Then it's as hurdle jumper Gary Power puts it: "The athletes are the only ones not making money around here. Everybody else is. Even the hot dog vendors."

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Hank Itkin

Demos ignore problems

Those familiar with *Steal This Book*, would not have been surprised to find counter-culture hero Abbie Hoffman loitering in the lobby of the Fountainbleau Hotel in Miami Beach sporting a Democratic National Convention press pass from Popular Mechanics magazine.

Abbie flashed a few grins around to the hordes of legitimate reporters and then began asking delegates what make of car they prefer.

The large red media card that Hoffman wore on a string around his neck admits the bearer to committee meetings, the floor of the convention and other convention activities. The occasion Sunday was a meeting of the Rules Committee.

Among the items on the committee's

agenda were two questions concerning University student John Stewart, a member of the Rules Committee and a delegate committed to McGovern.

The first item dealt with Stewart's proposal that the Democratic National Committee subsidize the travel expenses of duly elected delegates who cannot afford to travel to the national convention.

The second matter involved a possible action condemning the action taken by the U.S. Department of Justice against the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Earlier in the day, a member of the VVAW contacted Stewart and explained that Nixon forces were involved in a desperate effort to discredit the Vets.

A statement issued by the VVAW said

that late Friday afternoon, July 7, between 20 and 40 Vietnam veterans from around the country, many bound for Miami, were abruptly served by the FBI with subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury in Tallahassee, Florida on Monday, July 10.

The basis for the subpoenas stemmed from an open Southhead regional planning meeting held by the veterans in Florida more than a month ago to discuss plans for activities at both national conventions.

"Admitted FBI informers who have already surfaced," the statement read, "make it clear that Mitchell and Kleindienst have known about this meeting and the discussions there since the moment it occurred; yet no actions whatever were

taken by the Justice Department until the eve of the Democratic Convention... The entire Grand Jury proceeding is nothing less than a blatant attempt by the Republican administration to harass, intimidate and discredit its most eloquent antagonists... By subpoenaing the Vets at this moment, the Nixon administration sweeps them from the streets of Miami as effectively as would wholesale illegal arrests."

The Vets enlisted the support of Stewart and other members of the Oregon delegation; however, the issue was never raised at Sunday's meeting. After haggling for two hours about parliamentary procedure, the committee decided it had had enough for one day and adjourned.

