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The Battle over Athletic Priorities in the Louisville Y.M.C.A. 1892-1912

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Even though American interest in sport and athletics grew rapidly during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, American Y.M.C.A.s were slow to accept athletics as part of the Y.M.C.A. program. As late as 1900 only one out of three Y.M.C.A.s offered athletics as part of their program.¹ There were reasons for the Y.M.C.A.'s reluctance to include athletics. Y.M.C.A. programs were controlled by Boards of Directors, elected officials responsible for setting Y.M.C.A. policy and establishing overall Y.M.C.A. objectives. Most Y.M.C.A. Boards of Directors were controlled by evangelical businessmen who viewed athletics as an adjunct to religious work and permitted athletic programs only because they believed that competitive sport helped to recruit young men into the Y.M.C.A.² Even in those Y.M.C.A.'s that offered athletic programs there was the tendency to view athletics as an alien intrusion into the more important religious and welfare emphasis.³ Few Y.M.C.A. men serving on local Boards of Directors believed that athletics promoted intellectual, moral or religious improvement.⁴ Consequently, they questioned the inclusion of athletic competition as part of the Y.M.C.A.'s self-help program. The Y.M.C.A. lacked a philosophy of athletics that Y.M.C.A. Boards of Directors could accept, a philosophy that could place competitive sport within the context of individual development and that could direct Y.M.C.A. athletic programs toward the overall Y.M.C.A. objective of self-help.⁵

Luther Halsey Gulick provided Y.M.C.A. leaders with a philosophy of athletics that placed competitive sport within the realm of overall Y.M.C.A. objectives and served as the basis for athletic program development.⁶ The central tenets of Gulick's philosophy of athletics were crystallized for Y.M.C.A. delegates attending the International Y.M.C.A. Convention at Kansas City in 1891.⁷ All Y.M.C.A. work, according to Gulick, was based upon fundamental principles, the first being "man's essential unity, body, mind and spirit, each being necessary and eternal part of man, he being neither one alone, but the three."⁸ The second principle involved symmetry, "a proportional development of man's whole nature."⁹ The third principle was development: "We need development, education, training of each, but always and only in their true relations."¹⁰ By true relations Gulick meant that mind, body and spirit were of equal importance and were interrelated. Over all Y.M.C.A. objectives would be met through programs that relied upon an "all-embracing method" ¹¹ of training that avoided granting undue prominence to any one part. Athletic programs should emphasize individual all-around development so that "man may become strong, quick, enduring, skilled all in proportion."¹² This concept of proportional development through athletic participation became known as the philosophy of athleticism. The basic maxim of this philosophy was that sport should be used to develop the individual. A basic assumption of this position was that the individual benefitted from participation in a variety of sports. Gulick warned against paying "undue attention to skill, strength or endurance."¹³ Over emphasis prevented body symmetry, detracted from the development of mind and spirit, and diverted

attention from the Y.M.C.A. objective of individual self-improvement.¹⁴ Over emphasis was synonymous with professionalism. Professionalism was the antithesis of athleticism. Professionalism emphasized winning and replaced all around individual development with concentrated effort to develop the skills necessary for team success. Although Gulick crystallized the basic philosophy of athleticism and provided a brief list of warning signals to help delegates avoid the emergence of professionalism within their programs, the attempt by local Y.M.C.A.s across America to implement his ideas led to arguments about athletic priorities among local Y.M.C.A. leaders, professional secretaries, and Y.M.C.A. athletes.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the development of the struggle over athletic priorities in the Louisville Y.M.C.A. between 1892 and 1912.¹⁵ The focus is on the attempt by Louisville Y.M.C.A. General Secretaries and Physical Directors to win acceptance for Gulick's philosophy of athleticism among members of the Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors and among Y.M.C.A. athletes. This focus directs attention to three interrelated parts of the struggle: first, the consequences of relying on Gulick's philosophy of athleticism as the principal means of legitimating Y.M.C.A. athletics to Boards of Directors when Y.M.C.A. athletic teams began to compete against teams outside the confines of the Y.M.C.A.; second, the problems incurred when General Secretaries and Physical Directors tried to impose the philosophy of athleticism on Y.M.C.A. team members who were concerned about team victories; and third, the response of Y.M.C.A. athletes and avid fans when Y.M.C.A. Boards of Directors imposed sanctions against athletic practices that did not conform to the policy of athleticism.¹⁶

The battle over athletic priorities that began in the Louisville Y.M.C.A. during the summer of 1892 was influenced by the growing popularity of competitive athletics in Louisville. Competitive athletics existed in Louisville long before 1892 and had widespread support at least as early as 1870. Local professional and semiprofessional baseball teams, for example, had an extensive following during the late 1860's and 1870's.¹⁷ During the 1880's local newspapers, such as The Courier Journal, began to highlight the success of local amateur teams and local amateur athletes.¹⁸ The Louisville Athletic Club and the Louisville Turners, for example, were applauded by The Courier Journal because their athletes won gymnastic competitions, track and field meets, baseball championships, and football contests.¹⁹ Newspaper coverage of sport during the 1880's further popularized competitive athletics and documents the growing popularity of such activities in Louisville. Y.M.C.A. athletes were excluded from this process of public recognition and acclaim because the Y.M.C.A. didn't compete in athletic tournaments or athletic contests. During 1888 The Courier Journal chided the Y.M.C.A. about the absence of Christian athletes among the ranks of Louisville's athletic elites.²⁰ The Courier Journal continued to prod the Y.M.C.A. to test the prowess of its athletes in local and regional athletic contest during the ensuing years.²¹ By the summer of 1892 Y.M.C.A. members and athletes openly wondered about the Y.M.C.A.'s lack of commitment to competitive athletics. Many Y.M.C.A. athletes demanded access to competitive athletics within the Y.M.C.A.'s Physical Department program.²²

The Louisville Y.M.C.A.'s Physical Department had been formed in 1880.²³ The

philosophy of the Department regarding sport and athletic contests was very restrictive. Indeed, the Physical Department considered gymnastics as the only legitimate physical activity for Y.M.C.A. members.²⁴ There were reasons for their sole advocacy of gymnastics. First, local Y.M.C.A. leaders endorsed work and were suspicious of fun. Gymnastics was work. Through gymnastic classes the individual worked at improving all around health and fitness.²⁵ Individuals joined the Y.M.C.A.'s gymnastic program for the purpose of self-improvement. Self-improvement could be fun, but fun was a secondary outcome.²⁶ This was not necessarily true of sport and competitive athletics. An athlete might participate in sport or athletic competitions merely for fun. The problem was that you couldn't always determine why a person engaged in a particular activity whether it be gymnastics or athletics. This problem gave rise to the second major reason for advocating gymnastics as the only legitimate Y.M.C.A. physical activity. Results of gymnastic exercises could be measured and improvements documented.²⁷ Anthropometric measures could be taken on individual class members; a system of gymnastic exercises could be tailored for each individual; after the gymnastic program had been implemented, further anthropometric measures could be used to demonstrate the extent of improvement.²⁸ If an individual worked diligently, then improvements would be extensive. Sport and athletic contests by comparison did not have such easily measured outcomes.²⁹

The third reason for the advocacy of gymnastics had to do with the leadership of the Y.M.C.A. during the 1880's, a leadership that was completely changed by the summer of 1892. For most of the 1880's the Y.M.C.A. Physical Department was chaired by John B. Cecil.³⁰ Cecil was a medical doctor who taught in the University of Louisville Medical School. Cecil believed that exercise promoted health; he believed that exercise had to be planned and monitored in order to be effective; he believed that anthropometric measures were essential; he believed that measurement was the only way to prove that individual improvement had occurred.³¹ Cecil was not entirely opposed to games or sports or even athletic contests. However, he believed that gymnastics did a far more effective job of producing the desired improvements in health and fitness.³² For most of the 1880's John B. Cecil's philosophy dominated local Y.M.C.A. thinking about Physical Department programs.³³ However, as already suggested, the popularity of athletics in Louisville, the prodding of outsiders like The Courier Journal, the demand for athletic competition within the Y.M.C.A., and the new philosophy of athleticism advocated by the International Y.M.C.A. helped to erode the dominance of Cecil's philosophy within the Louisville Y.M.C.A. Further erosion took place after Cecil resigned from the Y.M.C.A. in 1888 and a new leadership group made up of prominent businessmen took control of the Louisville Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors. The businessmen who took control were more lenient towards athletic contests than Cecil had been.³⁴ However, much of Cecil's philosophy remained intact and influenced the battle over athletic priorities that began in 1892.

Three distinct groups were involved in the battle over athletic priorities in the Louisville Y.M.C.A. Group one was made up of Y.M.C.A. leaders on the Louisville Y.M.C.A.'s Board of Directors. Board members were elected officials with the responsibility of setting overall Y.M.C.A. objectives, deciding about program directions, hiring and firing administrative personnel, and determining which programs would be funded and which programs would be dropped. During the period under discussion membership on the

Board of Directors was dominated by businessmen in upper management positions. Nearly seventy-five percent of the men elected to the Board of Directors between the years of 1892 and 1912 owned their own business, or served on the board of directors of a business, or functioned as the top administrative officer of a business.³⁵ As a group they made decisions about Y.M.C.A. athletic priorities, programs, and personnel from a business perspective. They were concerned about program costs and effectiveness; they demanded that decisions about programs and personnel be data based.³⁶

Board of Directors' decisions about programs and personnel directly affected professional secretaries, the second group involved in the struggle over athletic priorities. Professional secretaries were paid administrators responsible for managing the daily activities of the Y.M.C.A. For the purposes of this paper only two categories of professional secretaries are important: General Secretaries, who were responsible for the overall management of the Y.M.C.A., and Physical Directors, who were responsible for the development and administration of the physical work program. The Board of Directors evaluated the effectiveness of the General Secretary and the Physical Director through two basic measures. The first measure was the number of participants in the program.³⁷ In the case of the General Secretary this meant the total number of participants in all Y.M.C.A. programs. In the case of the Physical Director the Board of Directors counted the number of participants in Physical Department programs. Because Physical Department programs had more participants than any other Y.M.C.A. program, this first measure linked the fortunes of the General Secretary with those of the Physical Director. The second measure of effectiveness was less precise. It involved intangibles such as public acclaim and public complaints.³⁸ Because the athletic program received the most public recognition in the form of both applause and criticism, this second measure also linked the fortunes of the General Secretary and the Physical Director. Both measures of job effectiveness depended upon the response of Y.M.C.A. athletes to athletic programs and policies.

Y.M.C.A. athletes, who competed for the Y.M.C.A. against outside teams, made up the third group involved in the controversy over athletic priorities. This third group had in common several ascribed characteristics which contributed to group solidarity. Nearly half of them were second and third generation Germans. Another twenty-three percent were Irish. Eighty percent of these German and Irish athletes resided in the Third and Eighth Wards. They lived with parents who were skilled craftsmen, small shop owners, and white collar workers. Almost all of these athletes were between the ages of twenty and thirty when they competed for the Y.M.C.A. Over seventy percent had at one time or another attended Manual Training School, a vocational training school, where they learned skills for white collar jobs. Sixty percent of them found employment in white collar jobs within a five block radius of the Y.M.C.A.³⁹

Common lineage, common residence, common education, common jobs, common age, and similar athletic interests helped to unify athletes and complicated efforts by General Secretaries and Physical Directors to impose Gulick's philosophy of athleticism on Y.M.C.A. team members. Neighborhood pride, group prestige, and local bragging rights made beating teams outside the Y.M.C.A. a top priority. Winning teams required highly skilled athletes with special abilities that could help the team win ball games. When Y.M.C.A. athletes lacked sufficient skill, team members recruited outsiders. The

philosophy of athleticism labeled skill specialization and recruiting as professionalism. Backed by the Board of Directors General Secretaries and Physical Directors tried to curb such excesses. Throughout the period under discussion athletes fought the restraints of athleticism. The development of this conflict can be seen most readily through the analysis of three major incidents and their impact on Y.M.C.A. leaders and members: the baseball recruiting problem of 1892, the football situation of 1900- 1902, and the quest for basketball supremacy, 1910to 1912.

The Baseball Recruiting Problem of 1892

The structural links between program funding and the number of participants in particular programs had important implications for the Y.M.C.A. gymnasium program which, in turn, exerted a considerable influence upon the initiation of a Y.M.C.A. baseball program. From Y.M.C.A. program data Y.M.C.A. leaders learned that the gymnasium accounted for nearly 80% of all the participants in Y.M.C.A. programs.⁴⁰ The large numbers attributed to the gymnasium classes meant two things to a Board of Directors interested in making decisions based upon hard data. First, the gymnasium was the principal attraction of the Louisville Y.M.C.A. program and the Board of Directors believed that the sport program should be expanded to attract larger numbers.⁴¹ Second, and most important, suggestions for new programs volunteered by gymnasium members would be listened to carefully and implemented if possible.⁴² Neither of these conclusions provoked philosophical inquiry. Both appeared to be practical measures. When Y.M.C.A. leaders learned that gymnasium members desired competition, they accepted the suggestion. Gymnastic competitions began almost immediately. Requests from this same group for handball courts, track and field meets, and bowling alleys met little resistance. In March of 1892 gymnasium members requested the formation of a Y.M.C.A. baseball team to play against outside competition. At its April, 1892 meeting the Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors agreed about the need for a Y.M.C.A. representative baseball team.⁴³

Although the Board of Directors remained silent about baseball's place within the overall objectives of the Y.M.C.A. program,⁴⁴ William F. Danner, the General Secretary, offered important insights in *The Young Man*, the Y.M.C.A.'s weekly bulletin and official voice on philosophical matters. Athletics developed well rounded individuals.⁴⁵ This meant, according to Danner, that athletic teams, like the baseball team, would be drawn from Y.M.C.A. members active in other Physical Department programs.⁴⁶ Competition against teams outside the Y.M.C.A. accomplished two additional objectives. First, it permitted the Y.M.C.A.'s better athletes an opportunity to test their skills against better competition.⁴⁷ Second, and far more important, it demonstrated the superiority of the Y.M.C.A.'s approach to athletic competition. "Superiority" is the key term. What Danner meant by the term was how Y.M.C.A. athletes played the game: "Always intend to play a gentlemanly game. Others should not play."⁴⁸ Team members may not have understood what Danner meant by gentlemanly game. The term "superiority" implied to them that the Y.M.C.A. baseball team should win.

The 1892 Y.M.C.A. baseball team didn't win. The Physical Director, Paul C. Phillips, a Springfield Y.M.C.A. College graduate and semipro baseball player, recruited the team from among the Y.M.C.A.'s best athletes.⁴⁹ The *Courier Journal* applauded the Y.M.C.A.'s first baseball team and announced "great expectations for the 'Y' team's

success."⁵⁰ But after the Y.M.C.A. nine lost their first game to Parkland, little more than a local playground club, by a score of 20-15, The *Courier Journal* began to wonder about the "Y" team.⁵¹ Perhaps Phillips' nickname for the club, the Muffers, was prophetic. A week later this same Parkland team beat the Muffers by an "unmentionable score."⁵² The *Courier Journal* sympathized with the Y.M.C.A. team's weaknesses while at the same time praising the diamond successes of the Turners, the Louisville Athletic Club, and the Louisville Baseball Club.⁵³ Even The Young Man, ever the promoter of Y.M.C.A. athletic accomplishments, felt compelled to apologize for the poor showing: "Suffice it to say that we are going to learn Base Ball all over again."⁵⁴ Further embarrassment came a week later. Although the Y.M.C.A. team won, defeating The *Courier Journal* newspapermen by a score of 17-6, The *Courier Journal* described the game in terms of comic relief.⁵⁵ *Courier Journal* readers might have chuckled about baseball ineptitude but Y.M.C.A. baseball team members were not amused. With a return match against Parkland only a week away, something had to be done.

The game against the newspapermen was the last embarrassment that the Y.M.C.A. team suffered on the baseball playing field during the summer of 1892. Beginning with a 20-5 defeat of Parkland, the Triangles, "a newly organized Y.M.C.A. team," won ten games in a row.⁵⁶ Their only defeat during the remainder of the season came against the Olympics, a charter member of the semipro Louisville Baseball league.⁵⁷ The success of the Triangles can be traced to the addition of new team members. Mal Marshall, John Norton, and Philip Owens were recruited from the Louisville Athletic Club's Baseball team. Alan V. Metzner came over from the Louisville Turners. Cal Carnigham, John Krepper and Thomas Means came directly from teams in the Louisville City league.⁵⁸ Paul C Phillips, the Y.M.C.A. Physical Director, and William L McNair, the Y.M.C.A. membership Secretary, also played for the team.⁵⁹ Both Phillips and McNair had played semipro baseball; indeed, every member of the Triangles had played semipro baseball. In July, Tom Lacy, and Cal Rice, "the Cumberland College battery that lost one game in three years,"⁶⁰ joined the Y.M.C.A. team. Understandably, the Y.M.C.A. baseball team was eminently successful on the field of play.

Within the Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors, applause for the Triangles' success was short lived. Complaints about the winning of baseball games taking precedence over Physical Department program objectives surfaced.⁶¹ The original purposes for forming a representative team had been thwarted. Marshall, Owens, Carnigham, Krepper, Means, Lacy and Rice were apparently only interim members of the Y.M.C.A.⁶² Metzner and Norton did actually become active Y.M.C.A. members.⁶³ Phillips and McNair were paid Y.M.C.A. employees. The baseball team may have represented the Y.M.C.A., but it was not a representative team comprised of the best Y.M.C.A. athletes. Who actually did the recruiting was never revealed. Circumstantial evidence points to baseball team members. Significantly, all the new additions to the "Y" team resided in either the Third or the Eighth ward. Moreover, with the exception of Metzner and Norton, all the new Triangle team players worked as clerks in the Louisville business district and all were approximately the same age.⁶⁴ Doubtless, the new team members knew each other prior to joining the team. This may account for the speed at which the new team was created. The *Courier Journal*, applauding the accomplishments of the "Y" baseball club, gave the credit for the team's success to the coaching of Paul C Phillips.⁶⁵ The Board of Directors reacted to the recruiting incident by requiring Board approval for all

competitions against teams outside of the Y.M.C.A. and by passing additional rules to insure that in the future all Y.M.C.A. "Representative Teams" would be drawn from active members only.⁶⁶ These steps may have led the Directors to believe that they had solved the problem of professionalism.

The Board of Directors, of course, had not solved the problem; they had only postponed it. There were three interrelated reasons for this. First, the demand within the Y.M.C.A. for competition against outside teams was very strong.⁶⁷ Second, the Board of Directors' system of funding those programs that drew large numbers of participants prompted Physical Directors and General Secretaries to listen to and implement demands originating from their more numerous and vocal constituents.⁶⁸ The largest and most vocal group within the Y.M.C.A.'s Physical Department consisted of Third and Eighth ward residents who wanted athletic competition.⁶⁹ Third, the demand for athletics by Third and Eighth ward residents initiated from the desire to compete successfully against outside teams.⁷⁰ The key terms here are compete successfully. The failure of the baseball team to win demonstrated a need for more highly skilled baseball players. The "muffers" were not competitive. Competitive meant more wins than losses. Competitive meant that Y.M.C.A. teams would not be embarrassed by lopsided scores. Competitive meant athletic specialization. The success of the Triangles as compared to the Muffers served as concrete proof of the relationship between specialization and superiority in the minds of team members, if not in the minds of Board members. For these reasons, the Board of Directors' decisions in the fall of 1892 didn't solve the problem of specialization.

Instead, the Board's decisions created an additional problem for the Y.M.C.A.'s professional staff. Danner and McNair, the new Physical Director, were both aware of the impact an ever-expanding athletic program had upon Y.M.C.A. memberships. Cuts in the athletic program decreased memberships, decreased the use of Y.M.C.A. facilities, and ultimately influenced the Board's assessment of both Danner's and McNair's job effectiveness. Danner and McNair were also aware of the athlete's attitudes about winning. They could not put athletic teams on the field that could not compete. Both Danner and McNair realized the importance of convincing Board members that athletics and athletic specialization functioned to meet Y.M.C.A. objectives, while, at the same time, persuading Y.M.C.A. athletes that winning wasn't the only reason to compete. As these two secretaries responded to challenges from Board members about overemphasis on winning and to challenges from athletes about the need for athletic success, they initiated a legitimation process that linked together notions about self-help, specialization and athletic success.

Following the baseball recruiting problem of 1892, Danner began a concerted effort to legitimate the athletic program. When athletics first appeared in the columns of *The Young Man*, Danner merely advertised the athletic program and announced the new competitive opportunities made available by the Y.M.C.A.⁷¹ Periodically, he reminded readers that sport was merely an adjunct to the more important Y.M.C.A. self-help program.⁷² However, after the 1892 Baseball season, Danner found it necessary to do more than declare athletics an adjunct to the overall Y.M.C.A. program. Before the beginning of the 1893 Baseball season he informed readers of *The Young Man* that athletics constituted one of the main attractions of the Y.M.C.A. and was responsible for

the growing number of active Y.M.C.A. memberships.⁷³ Distinct advantages derived, he argued, from this attraction. In the first place, Y.M.C.A. programs designed to produce well rounded employees were useless unless workers could be induced to join the Y.M.C.A.⁷⁴ Athletics served this function. Competitive athletics were a great inducement for young men to join the Y.M.C.A. Once workers became active members, then vocational, religious, and physical training programs could be implemented.⁷⁵ Danner didn't argue that every white collar worker recruited through athletic competition would elect to join vocational or religious classes; he merely pointed out that workers had to become active Y.M.C.A. members before self-help programs could begin. Danner repeated the recruitment theme in *The Young Man* periodically throughout 1893 and 1894.⁷⁶ Occasionally, he enlisted the support of local ministers, quoting selections from their "Special Talks to Young Men" to support his contention that athletics was the great recruiter.⁷⁷ Guest editorials in *The Young Man* and guest appearances by Y.M.C.A. professionals from other cities provided further support for Danner's position.⁷⁸ Danner's approach was pragmatic. He attempted to establish sport and athletics as the major recruiting tool used by the Y.M.C.A. to attract white collar workers. In so doing he related the emphasis on sport and athletics directly to total program numbers. In his annual reports for 1893 and 1894 he documented the influence that the expanding athletic program had on total Y.M.C.A. memberships. His point was clear: the athletic program benefitted the Y.M.C.A. and the business community because it was the Y.M.C.A.'s major recruiter of young men and was largely responsible for the size of the overall Y.M.C.A. program.

While Danner supported athletics because of its impact on program numbers, William I. McNair argued that athletics fulfilled specific Y.M.C.A. objectives. In his 1893 annual report for the Physical Department McNair presented the idea that athletics served to integrate mind, body, and spirit.⁷⁹ Further, he argued that athletics provided tangible proof that integration had occurred.⁸⁰ In the same report, McNair presented the idea that athletic training and business success were related. As evidence, he pointed out that several prominent members of Y.M.C.A. athletic teams had obtained jobs during the year and that their new employers were pleased with their work. McNair continued the theme of athletics' beneficial influences through a series of articles in *The Young Man* during November of 1893.⁸¹ On November 3rd he argued that athletics were educational. Athletics provided knowledge about the body and about individual strengths and weaknesses.⁸² The following week McNair lectured readers of *The Young Man* that athletics taught team work, cooperation, and a concern for others.⁸³ In the 1893 Thanksgiving issue of *The Young Man* McNair proclaimed that athletics built men. The wholesome influences of athletics, argued McNair, aided mental and moral development.⁸⁴ During December McNair tried to establish for the readers of *The Young Man* the spiritual and moral impact of athletics.⁸⁵ In each of the above arguments McNair contended that athletics met overall Y.M.C.A. objectives and produced better employees.

During 1894 McNair and Danner concentrated on legitimating athletics as a means of social control. Athletics, they argued, drew young men away from saloons "and other places of demoralizing character."⁸⁶ The Y.M.C.A. gymnasium and athletic fields provided attractive and wholesome alternatives to the vices of the inner city life.⁸⁷ Periodically *The Young Man* published surveys that compared the number of saloons in

Louisville with the number of Christian gymnasiums and Christian athletic fields available to young men.⁸⁸ In these comparisons athletics and the Y.M.C.A. program were placed in juxtaposition with the evil forces of urban life, and the success of the Y.M.C.A. athletic program was applauded. Both Danner and McNair claimed that young men who participated in sport under the direction of Y.M.C.A. leaders did not frequent bars and were happily spared the deleterious effects of drink and other related vices.⁸⁹

The attempt by Danner and McNair to win acceptance for athletics suffered setbacks in 1895. Both secretaries continued to stress athletics' contributions to recruitment, mental and moral development, physical improvement and social control. However, the Board of Directors, faced with financial difficulties spawned by the 1890's depression, argued about emphasis.⁹⁰ The majority of the Board believed that the Y.M.C.A.'s commitment to the business community could best be fulfilled by a broad-based program aimed at developing vocational skills, moral strength, and physical health. This of course was not new; it had been the Y.M.C.A. objective from the beginning of the decade. The problem was that even though sport and athletic programs grew in participant numbers, the vocational and religious programs lagged farther and farther behind.⁹¹ Some Board members wondered about the developmental functions of athletics. When it was learned that handball, bowling, football and baseball actually drew numbers away from gymnastics, and by implication other Y.M.C.A. training classes, the Board responded by either eliminating the offending sport or limiting the opportunity for participation.⁹² The Board contended that athletics was play and, although these activities might influence the development of successful businessmen, other Y.M.C.A. activities, such as vocational classes and religious training, did a substantially more effective job.⁹³ McNair and Danner attempted to counter these arguments by claiming that athletics did in fact develop successful businessmen. To substantiate their claims McNair and Danner secured statements from prominent local businessmen that athletic participation had had a positive impact on their business success. Frequently, *The Young Man* noted that men from athletic backgrounds secured good jobs and were productive members of important firms. Athletic success, in these arguments, influenced future business success.⁹⁴

The extent to which the Board accepted such arguments is unclear. Part of McNair's and Danner's difficulties in convincing Board members about the importance of athletics within the Y.M.C.A. program was the question of athletic specialization. Athletic success required athletic specialization. Board members were well aware of this fact; the 1892 semipro Y.M.C.A. baseball team and the Y.M.C.A. amateur teams that followed dispelled any illusions about the ability of well-rounded athletes to compete against baseball specialists. As late as 1895 Board members viewed specialization as detrimental to Y.M.C.A. objectives of overall individual development.⁹⁵ What Danner and McNair needed was an argument for athletic specialization that could convince Board members that there was a relationship between athletic specialization and Y.M.C.A. self-help objectives.

The Football Situation of 1900-1902

Through his legitimation of football, Henry M. Mecklin provided Danner and McNair with arguments that linked athletic specialization, business success, and Y.M.C.A. self-help objectives. Mecklin, a Springfield College graduate and successful football coach, was

hired by the Louisville Y.M.C.A. in 1899 as Physical Director.⁹⁶

The demand for a Y.M.C.A. football program had grown steadily during the 1890's. At the urging of Mecklin the Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors condescended in 1901 to what they perceived to be "popular demand."⁹⁷ Their consent, however, was granted with certain restrictions: "The football program must adhere to Y.M.C.A. rules pertaining to representative teams."⁹⁸ Mecklin did two things that ultimately made football acceptable to the Board of Directors as an important Y.M.C.A. tool for improving young men. First, Mecklin presented football as work not play. On October 14, 1901 Mecklin began a series of weekly columns in *The Young Man* devoted exclusively to football. In these columns he explained the necessity of hard work for football success.⁹⁹ Second, Mecklin linked hard work to self-help. Hard work at football, argued Mecklin, taught discipline, taught young men how to succeed, taught the necessity of cooperation and team work to secure a common goal, and taught the importance of self-control as opposed to self-indulgence.¹⁰⁰ Equally important, Mecklin portrayed football as an educator of young men, a developer of vigor and spirit, and a moral educator.¹⁰¹ Football was, Mecklin announced, "the cement that held mind, body, and spirit together."¹⁰² These arguments conformed to the Y.M.C.A.'s emphasis on individual development and self-help programs.

But Mecklin added something else that had an important impact on the struggle between Y.M.C.A. General Secretaries and Y.M.C.A. athletes over athletic priorities. In 1901, the program's first official year, the Y.M.C.A. football team was declared the Kentucky State champion.¹⁰³ They played and defeated the top teams in the state, teams that had maintained football programs for a number of years.¹⁰⁴ Y.M.C.A. football success continued in 1902 when the Y.M.C.A. team again fought for the state championship.¹⁰⁵ The success of Mecklin's football teams brought recognition and prestige to the Louisville Y.M.C.A.¹⁰⁶ Mecklin was quick to exploit this advantage. The recognition and prestige derived from victory; victory was the result of hard work; hard work was a form of self-help that led to team cooperation, self-control, moral development and future success for the individual. There were two important implications in Mecklin's position. The first implication was that victory was the measure for whether the lessons athletics taught were actually learned. Athletics became its own best test for whether it worked or not. On the athletic field men demonstrated the lessons learned through participation: "On the football field, young men displayed intelligence, spirit, moral worth, team work, leadership and physical health and fitness."¹⁰⁷ All that was necessary to prove that athletics accomplished all that Mecklin claimed for it was merely to watch men play to see if they were winners or, barring that opportunity, to scrutinize the team's won-loss record. The second implication is more important. Mecklin's teams won because of athletic specialization. When Mecklin argued that hard work produced winners, he was arguing for athletic specialization and skill development. In so doing he was connecting athletic specialization to overall Y.M.C.A. objectives. In Mecklin's terms athletic specialization was a form of self-help.¹⁰⁸

Mecklin might contend that athletic specialization met Y.M.C.A. objectives because the hard work necessary for football success functioned as a medium for individual self-help, but there was a great deal more operating here than just discipline, training, and

hard work. In the first place, only a few second stringers were actual full-time Y.M.C.A. members. The bulk of the football team qualified as "Y" members by virtue of a "three-month membership rule" passed by the Board of Directors in 1898.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the football players did not enroll in any other Y.M.C.A. programs. They played football from September through November and then dropped out of the Y.M.C.A. for the remainder of the year.¹¹⁰ Second, the football team's championship record resulted more from recruiting than from self-development. Team members included former high school stars, college standouts, and the best of the Louisville Athletic Club players.¹¹¹ Team players did the actual recruiting. When weaknesses were discovered at particular positions, new players were sought.¹¹²

The 1902 team is perhaps the best single example of the "Y" teams power to recruit. The team featured four running backs, Patsey Lord, Bobby Crowe, William F. Rogers and C.E. Davis, each of whom averaged over 100 yards rushing per game.¹¹³ The most interesting of the running backs was Charles E. "Patsey" Lord. Lord was five foot ten inches tall, weighed 180 pounds, and by all reports was extremely fast.¹¹⁴ He began his football career at Male High School during the mid-1890s.¹¹⁵ In the fall of 1897 he transferred to Manual Training School, Male High School's arch football rival.¹¹⁶ Patsey played football during the fall and flunked out after the first semester. He enrolled again during the fall of 1898 with the same result.¹¹⁷ Between 1899 and 1901, when he joined the Y.M.C.A. team, Patsey played football for the Bethel College team, despite the fact that he did not possess a high school diploma.¹¹⁸ The careers of Crowe and Rogers followed a similar pattern. Both played for Manual Training School during the fall, were dismissed before the spring semester for lack of attendance, and enrolled again the following fall.¹¹⁹ C.E. Davis is a bit of a mystery. He was apparently not a Louisvillian. Davis played for the Bethel College football team during the 1900 and 1901 seasons. He joined the Y.M.C.A. team in 1902.¹²⁰

The problem went beyond recruiting. First, when the Board of Directors sanctioned the formation of a Y.M.C.A. football team in 1901, they were in effect sanctioning a team that already existed. The 1900 Y.M.C.A. team, although not officially recognized by the Board, won the state football championship; team members claimed to represent the Louisville Y.M.C.A.¹²¹ Second, the Y.M.C.A. football program was virtually a highly organized separate entity. The football program had its own committees for management, advertising, ground • alumni, rooting, gate receipts, and tickets. Committee members were not always Y.M.C.A. members.¹²² Indeed, both committee membership and team membership reflected eighth ward affiliation, via Manual Training school, far more than they reflected Y.M.C.A. affiliation.¹²³ The vast majority of team members were white collar workers of German and Irish extraction.¹²⁴ They grew up in the eighth ward; many resided in Germantown.¹²⁵ Their loyalties lay with their local community not the Y.M.C.A. Third, these football players had little interest in the Y.M.C.A.'s self-help program. They joined the Y.M.C.A. for three months because they wanted to play football. They recruited their friends to join the "Y" team because they wanted to win. When the football season finished, they went their separate ways.

There were significant differences between the Board of Directors reaction to the baseball recruiting problem of 1892 and the Boards handling of the football situation of 1902. In 1892 the Board of Directors reacted quickly and decisively to curb athletic

specialization in baseball. The Board passed specific procedures for the approval of outside competitions and established rules to prevent outsiders from representing the Y.M.C.A. on athletic teams. In its reaction to baseball recruiting, the Board of Directors made clear that the philosophy of athleticism was to be maintained. A decade later the Board acted slowly, indecisively, even reluctantly to deal with what it called "the football situation." At the December, 1902, Board of Directors meeting, the Directors heard arguments for and against the football program. The managers of the football team presented the case for football; William I. McNair, the Y.M.C.A.'s General Secretary, presented the case against football.¹²⁶ The exact particulars of the arguments were not recorded.¹²⁷ Unlike the 1892 recruiting problem, the Board of Directors did not apparently feel the need to defend athleticism or to attack professionalism. Unlike 1892 there were no new Y.M.C.A. rules designed to prevent a reoccurrence of the situation. The Board merely voted to ban football and said nothing about the football situation.¹²⁸ Indeed, the Board of Directors never even said why football was being eliminated. *The Young Man*, the official Louisville Y.M.C.A. voice on philosophical matters, didn't announce the dropping of the football program. *The Courier Journal* and other local newspapers also remained silent.

The Board's silence on the football situation helped to blur the distinctions between athleticism and professionalization. Mecklin had argued repeatedly that athletic specialization and athletic competition met Y.M.C.A. objectives by functioning as a medium for individual self-help. Hard work, discipline, team effort and, most important, specialization became elements of the athletic formula for self-improvement. Success on the football field proved that the athletic formula worked. When the Board chose not to attack such notions by pointing out that Y.M.C.A. football success was actually the result of professionals playing against amateurs, it was tacitly condoning Mecklin's arguments. Because the Board did not point out that Mecklin's athletic formula did not necessarily work, or, more specifically, did not always function for self-improvement, the legitimation for athletic programs that Mecklin presented remained untouched. Finally, because the Board did not point out that specialization might lead to corruption, and Patsey Lord would have been a good example, they left intact the notion that individuals who strive for athletic excellence are necessarily good. The significance of this fact is that it blurred the original distinctions between athleticism and professionalization in two important ways. First, it made the purpose for specialization, whether for individual development or for team success, a matter of subjective judgment. This meant that two individuals looking at the exact same situation could come to different conclusions about the purpose of specialization depending on their points of view. Second, it clouded the issue of individual development versus team development by making team success a measure of both. The impact of this blurring of distinctions is clearly seen through the analysis of the Y.M.C.A.'s quest for basketball supremacy.

The Quest for Basketball Supremacy: 1910-1912

On the evening of February 4th, 1910, the quest for Y.M.C.A. basketball supremacy took a turn for the worst. The Centre College basketball team beat the Y.M.C.A. representative team by a score of 35 to 22.¹²⁹ The Centre College victory meant that the Y.M.C.A. team had failed for the second year in a row to capture the state championship. During the week prior to the game *The Courier Journal* carried feature

articles about the upcoming contest. Claims about Y.M.C.A. basketball supremacy were intermixed with photographs of "Y" team players.¹³⁰ On February 5th, the morning after the championship game. *The Courier Journal* reported the score in large type and pointed out that the "Y" team had been, "outgeneraled and outplayed."¹³¹ The Centre College players were singled out for special praise. Three days later George McIlhenny, the Y.M.C.A. Physical Director, resigned.¹³² McIlhenny's resignation signaled the start of open warfare within the Y.M.C.A. over the basketball program. Samuel Messix, the Assistant Physical Director, resigned in protest over McIlhenny's resignation. Teams in the Y.M.C.A.'s Friday Night Basketball League, angered about McIlhenny's resignation, decided to suspend further play. Members of the Gymnasium Committee also resigned in protest. Petitions for McIlhenny's reinstatement were initiated. Other petitions, seeking the removal of William I. McNair, the Y.M.C.A.'s General Secretary, were circulated. Ormond Summers, manager of the Y.M.C.A.'s representative basketball team and chairman of the Basketball Committee, hired an attorney to present the petitioners demands to the Board of Directors.¹³³ McIlhenny's supporters claimed that McNair had forced the resignation of the Physical Director. They blamed McNair for the 1902 loss of the football program and the consequent resignation of Mecklin. They were convinced that McNair was trying to ruin the basketball program. McNair, they argued, was responsible for "the deterioration of the athletic program."¹³⁴ Petitioners demanded his removal. There was truth in the petitioners' claims. The issue that separated McNair from McIlhenny and the petitioners was athleticism. McNair had been responsible for curbing what he and the Board of Directors considered excesses in the football program, excesses that involved professionalization. Further, McNair probably had also influenced the resignation of Mecklin; Mecklin had been the person responsible for the Y.M.C.A. football program. Finally, the petitioners were quite correct in blaming McNair for the resignation of McIlhenny. The extent of and reason for McNair's displeasure with McIlhenny is unclear. The basketball program either generated a large part of the displeasure or constituted the final straw. The morning after *The Courier Journal* berated the Y.M.C.A. basketball team for being "outgeneraled and outplayed," it carried a feature article about a ringer team in the Y.M.C.A.'s Friday night league.¹³⁵ The Owls had dominated the Friday night league for three years. In fact, between 1908, when the league had been formed, and February 6th, 1910, when *The Courier Journal* article appeared, the Owls had never been tested.¹³⁶ The Physical Director, McIlhenny, had apparently allowed a group of Manual Training School graduates to form their own team and enter the league. The Owls were led by William Osborne, Jr., a player described by *The Courier Journal* as the best guard in the South. Osborne was joined on the team by Earl Wilson, described as one of the best shooting forwards in the region, and Frank Ropke, a great defensive player and rebounder.¹³⁷ Having a ringer team in a Y.M.C.A. recreational league embarrassed McNair, particularly when *The Courier Journal* announced the fact and proclaimed that, "there was little interest in the league because the Owls were too strong."¹³⁸ Perhaps it was mere coincidence, but the Owls' team strengths were in the precise positions that *The Courier Journal* had portrayed as the major weaknesses of the Y.M.C.A.'s representative team.¹³⁹ The loss to Centre College added to the Y.M.C.A.'s embarrassment because *The Courier Journal* pointed out that the Y.M.C.A.'s best players remained in the Friday night league.¹⁴⁰ Evidence suggests that McNair may have planned to hire a new Physical Director even before the Centre

College loss. McIlhenny resigned on February 9th; William E. Brown became the new Physical Director on February 14th.¹⁴¹ William E. Brown, prior to joining the Louisville Y.M.C.A. staff, had been the Physical Director of the Lexington Y.M.C.A.¹⁴² McNair's reasons for forcing McIlhenny to resign and for hiring Brown were presented in an open letter in *The Young Man* on February 17th. Brown was hired, announced McNair, "because he believes in the fundamental principle that men should not be used to build up athletics, but that athletics should be used to build up men, and that the Y.M.C.A., above all institutions, stands for the all round development-Spirit, Mind and Body."¹⁴³

The petitioners who supported McIlhenny were also, in part, responsible for his dismissal. The leaders of the petitioners lived and worked in the Third and Eighth wards.¹⁴⁴ Some had attended Manual Training School, others had graduated from Manual Training School, and all of them supported Manual Training School during the yearly athletic battles with rival Male High School.¹⁴⁵ Part of their support derived from local pride and the desire for local bragging rights. But it went deeper than that. Male High School graduates frequently attended college. College afforded specialized training and Male High School graduates frequently got better jobs. In general, they ended their careers in top management positions. Manual Training School graduates became clerks, craftsmen, small shop owners, and occasionally blue collar workers. In general, they ended their careers in lower management positions.¹⁴⁶ The loss to Centre College struck a stinging blow to Eighth ward egos. Male High School graduates dominated the Centre College team.¹⁴⁷ Manual Training school graduates dominated the Y.M.C.A. team.¹⁴⁸ The state championship game was, therefore, the culminating struggle in an intense and acerbic local rivalry. The petitioners. Eighth and Third ward residents and Manual Training School supporters, started the ruckus because they were mad at McIlhenny. They were unconcerned about the questionable ethics of fielding a ringer team in the Friday night league. Indeed, they applauded the success on the basketball court of Manual Training School graduates. Athleticism was not the issue to them; winning was. They were angry because the Y.M.C.A. had not put its best team on the court.¹⁴⁹ In their eyes Male High School, disguised as Centre College, had been allowed to win for the second year in a row because of incompetence.

Although McNair, supported by the Board of Directors, appeared to win the battle, retaining his position as General Secretary, in the end athleticism lost. The petitions, although not ignored, were simply not acted upon. Athleticism continued as the official policy of the Louisville Y.M.C.A. On March 1, 1910 William E. Brown took over the direction of the Physical Department. During the fall of 1911, Brown reorganized the Friday night league, "insuring in the process that no ringer teams could be created."¹⁵⁰ The representative team was reorganized during January of 1912.¹⁵¹ A new manager was chosen and tryouts were announced for team positions. On February 27, 1913 the Y.M.C.A. representative team beat the Centre College team by a score of 83 to 24.¹⁵² The Y.M.C.A. team was captained by William Osborne, Jr.; Earl Wilson and Frank Ropke played forward for the team. The Y.M.C.A. team featured John Jansing, a six foot four inch center and former Manual Training School basketball star. *The Courier Journal* described Jansing as one of the best centers ever to play in the South.¹⁵³ Presumably, Third and Eighth ward residents celebrated the victory.

The Battle over Athletic Priorities in Retrospect

Between 1892 and 1912 Louisville Y.M.C.A. General Secretaries and Physical Directors presented athletics as a legitimate part of the Y.M.C.A.'s self-help program. Throughout this period their arguments for the athletic program drew heavily upon accepted notions about the benefits of sport. During the 1890's, for example, Danner and McNair sought acceptance of the athletic program among Y.M.C.A. Board members by claiming that athletics helped recruit active members, functioned as a social control mechanism, and influenced individual moral and physical development. These legitimations echoed the official Y.M.C.A. philosophy of athleticism. The philosophy of athleticism appeared to function effectively as long as the athletic program remained within the Y.M.C.A. Outside programs were another matter. Attempts to apply the philosophy of athleticism to athletic competitions against outside groups met resistance when "Y" teams lost. The problem was that competitions against outside teams generated emotions and an emphasis on winning that directly conflicted with the Y.M.C.A.'s strict interpretation of athleticism. There were three interrelated reasons for this predicament. In the first place, Y.M.C.A. representative teams, like baseball, football, and basketball, tended to be regarded by outside observers, *The Courier Journal*, for example, as visible measures of the total Y.M.C.A. program. Although the inaccuracy of such a correlation should have been obvious to Y.M.C.A. leaders, some within their ranks succumbed to conventional opinion. In 1901 and 1902, for example, Mecklin legitimated football as an accurate measure of the effectiveness of the Y.M.C.A.'s self-help program.

A second problem developed when the Y.M.C.A.'s strict interpretation of athleticism became mixed with the notion that success on the sport field measured program effectiveness. When Y.M.C.A. professional secretaries stated that Y.M.C.A. athletic teams ought to be superior, they meant superior in regard to how the team played the game: "Always play like gentlemen, others ought not to play."¹⁵⁴ However, most Y.M.C.A. members considered superiority to mean success on the playing field.

Third, the adoption of won-lost record as a measure of program effectiveness subverted distinctions between athletics when used to develop the individual and athletics when individual development was directed at team success. The problem was that the purpose for specialization remained a matter of subjective judgment. Although Mecklin argued that individual specialization was an integral part of the Y.M.C.A.'s self-help program because of the hard work, discipline, and moral development involved, the impact of such individual behaviors on team success was obvious. The question was whether the individual specialized for the purpose of individual development or for the purpose of team success and, of course, whether such distinctions even mattered. McNair and Brown, trained Y.M.C.A. leaders, could comprehend the interrelationships between athleticism, self-help, and specialization (specialization rightly understood as the development of physical skills - one factor in the all-around development of the individual), but Y.M.C.A. athletes didn't understand the distinction between how one played the game and winning. Instead, they combined the two concepts: if the team won, then it must have played well. If winning teams were a measure of program effectiveness, or self-help, or future business success, then the steps necessary for team success ought to be followed. Under such circumstances athletic specialization functioned in ways that were unacceptable to advocates of athleticism.

The Louisville Y.M.C.A. General Secretaries and Physical Directors who legitimated the

Y.M.C.A.'s athletic program fought a battle on two fronts. Between the years of 1892 and 1912 they attempted to convince the Board of Directors that the athletic program functioned to meet the Y.M.C.A. general objectives of all around development and self-help. During this same time. General Secretaries and Physical Directors tried to convince Y.M.C.A athletes about the proper emphasis and measures for athletic participation. As has been discussed, the Louisville Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors gradually accepted athletics as part of the Y.M.C.A.'s total program. In this respect the efforts of General Secretaries and Physical Directors to legitimate the Athletic Program succeeded. Athletes and their avid supporters were another matter. Throughout the period under discussion they emphasized victory. Reasons varied: local pride, high school bragging rights, class animosity, program effectiveness, or simply to desire to win.

Furthermore, as the programs developed athletic supporters became more difficult to deal with. They did not have much to say in 1892 when the Y.M.C.A. stopped semipro from representing the Y.M.C.A. on the baseball team. In 1902, however, they sent representatives to argue with the Board of Directors about the necessity of a winning football program. By 1910 they were even more ready to fight and far more organized than in 1902. Third and Eighth ward Y.M.C.A. members and athletes resented the elimination of ringers from Y.M.C.A. teams when such actions prevented victory. They resented lofty philosophical statements about athletic ideas; McNair's statement, 'Centre College won because they were a better team',¹⁵⁵ is a good example; such statements stung local egos. For these reasons Eighth and Third ward athletes and their followers attacked the Y.M.C.A. leadership in the local newspaper, demanded McNair's removal, and hired an attorney to represent them. Even though the Board supported McNair, the attitudes of athletes did not change. They simply got around the rules and the philosophies. Winning was too important, and there were too many avid athletic followers. Athleticism was fine, just so long as it did not prevent victory. In the end the two contending priorities for athletic program outcomes were not reconciled. Y.M.C.A. leaders continued to espouse the philosophy of athleticism and, Y.M.C.A. athletes and their followers continued to act as if such ideals didn't really matter.

NOTES

¹Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951), p. 245. Hopkins develops the history of Physical Work in the Y.M.C.A.s of North America in Chapter six, pp. 245-270.

²*Ibid.* pp. 245 + 246.

³*Ibid.* pp. 246-251.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.* See also G.F. Thompson, "History of the Physical Work in the Y.M.C.A. of America," *Association Seminar*, July, 1904, P. 380. Thompson's history appears in

serial form beginning with the May issue of *Association Seminar* and ending with the October issue.

⁶Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A.*, Pp. 251-254; LL Doggett, *A Man and His School* (New York: Association Press, 1943), p. 48.

⁷Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A.* p.254.

⁸Ibid. pp. 254-256.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Donald Mrozek has thoughtfully developed these conflicting priorities as they relate to larger national trends during the period from 1880 to 1910. Donald Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality 1880-1910* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), see chapter three, "Winning and the Regulated Life -The New Experts in Physical Culture." Ronald A. Smith studies these priorities as they relate to the development of big time college athletics. His focus is primarily on Ivy League colleges. Ronald A. Smith, *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹⁶There are several things that a paper of this size cannot hope to accomplish. First, we make no attempt to trace the origin or the development of the ideas used by Y.M.C.A. General Secretaries and Physical Directors to legitimate athletics. Second, we make no attempt to discuss macro themes that influenced local developments. Obviously, middle class consciousness and middle class concerns about masculinity influenced local Y.M.C.A. decisions about the importance of athletics. Moreover, nationwide concerns about the search for order, and the beginning of a new century also influenced Y.M.C.A. leaders and members. These themes are developed by others. See Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality*; J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1977); Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967). Third, we do not detail the structural elements within the Louisville Y.M.C.A.'s organizational plan that influenced the adoption of the athletic program. The development of what became known as the Louisville "Metropolitan Plan," with its structured measures of success and failure, and how this plan guaranteed the acceptance of athletics is a separate topic. See for examples *Minutes of the Meetings of the Louisville Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors*, December 27, 1887 (hereafter cited as *Minutes*). The concern among Y.M.C.A. Board members about program costs and program numbers was a continuing theme. Cf. *Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Louisville Y.M.C.A.* for the years 1888, 1890, 1892, 1893, 1894 and 1895 (hereafter cited as *Annual Report*). The *Minutes* can

be found in The Filson Club archives. The *Annual Report* can be found in the Archives of the Louisville Y.M.C.A.

¹⁷A. H. Tarvin *75 Years on Louisville Diamonds* (Louisville: Schulman Publications, Publishers, 1940). For a synopsis of newspaper coverage see *The Courier Journal* beginning in 1869 (April through August) and continuing during the same months for the 1870's.

¹⁸*The Courier Journal* began periodic coverage of local amateurs during 1880. By 1885 *The Courier Journal* had moved to including a weekly section in the Saturday morning paper that highlighted local athletes. Frequently pictures and brief thumbnail biographies were included. In 1890 a Sunday morning section on local athletes was added.

¹⁹*The Courier Journal* beginning on September 19, 1888. The best examples of this are *The Courier Journal* October 12, 1890; November 17, 1890; November 19, 1890; July 26, 1891; May 17, 1891.

²⁰*The Courier Journal* May 22, 1888.

²¹See for examples: *The Courier Journal* September 6, 1890; June 6, 1891; July 26, 1891; May 1, 1892.

²²*Minutes*, April 1, 1889; June 25, 1889; March 31, 1891; December 29, 1891; May 4, 1892.

²³Lawrence W. Fielding and Clark F. Wood, "From Religious Outreach to Social Entertainment: The Louisville Y.M.C.A.'s First Gymnasium," *The Filson Club Historical Quarterly* Vol. 60, No.2 (April, 1986), pp. 239-256.

²⁴*Ibid.* John B. Cecil was responsible for developing the Y.M.C.A.'s Physical Department philosophy. For examples see *Annual Report* 1880. Cecil's philosophy was repeated in *Annual Report* for the years 1881, 1882, 1885, and 1888.

²⁵*Ibid.* These arguments are presented in *Annual Report* 1880 and 1885.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹*Ibid.* For the social and intellectual climate within the Y.M.C.A. during the period when Cecil developed the Physical Department philosophy see Fielding and Wood, "From Religious Outreach to Social Entertainment."

³⁰This paragraph is a brief synopsis of a separate paper; "John B. Cecil and the Popular Health Movement in the Louisville Y.M.C.A." which is in manuscript form. We are highlighting those points which directly impact on the battle over athletic priorities.

³¹*Annual Report* 1880.

³²*Minutes* April 4, 1889.

³³See footnote 30.

³⁴*The Young Man* January 11, 1895; June 14, 1895. The impact of the business

community on the Y.M.C.A. is discussed.

³⁵Between 1892 and 1912, 41 different men served on the Board of Directors. Through the use of City Directories and the Original Census report for 1900, we traced 30 of these men to upper management positions in Louisville businesses. Members of the Board of Directors were elected by the general membership to three year terms. The average length of service on the Board was six years. A significant number of these upper management Board members (17) served twelve years and more. Three of them were Board members for the entire twenty year period.

³⁶We classified all decisions made by the Board of Directors that were recorded in the *Minutes* from 1892 - 1912 to determine the number and kind of Board decisions. 31.5% were work related decisions (470/1488). 68% were strategic decisions (1018/1488). 56% of strategic decisions (573/1018) were classified as economic. Nearly 85% (863/1018) of the Board's strategic decisions utilized data based information. When we cross referenced strategic decisions involving program decisions with economic decisions, we discovered that nearly 90% (88/100) were based upon economic considerations. Further cross referencing among the following categories: policy decisions, sport policy decisions, organizational control, programs, and economics revealed the following data. Policy decisions accounted for 17% of Board decisions (171/1018). In this category 23% (40) involved sport. 62% (106) involved matters of organizational control. Cross referencing revealed that 17 sport policy decisions (42.5%) were the outgrowth of the number of participants and the demand for access to specific programs. Each of these decisions included economic considerations. 23 decisions (57.5%) involved considerations about organizational control. None of these decisions included economic considerations.

³⁷There are many examples of this in the *Minutes*. See especially October 25, 1892; January 1, 1895; February 11, 1896; January 12, 1897; February 25, 1898; September 17, 1901; February 18, 1902; January 20, 1903. For specific demands made by the Board of Directors that Department Secretaries provide appropriate data see *Minutes*, October 8, 1895; November 12, 1895; December 10, 1895; January 14, 1895. For examples of data and how it was used see *Annual Report* starting with 1892 and continuing through 1912.

³⁸See note 36. Of the 40 sport policy decisions made during the period 23 were the result of complaints.

³⁹We used City Directories and the Original Census report for 1900 to obtain information about nationality, residence, job title, and place of work. Between the years 1892 and 1912 we located slightly over 1100 Y.M.C.A. athletes. The largest subgroup identified by nationality were German (43%) and Irish (23%). Nearly 70% of Y.M.C.A. athletes lived in the Third and Eighth wards. We further subdivided the total group into athletes who participated on the 1892 Baseball team (N 20), the 1900- 1902 Football team (N = 61), and the 1910- 1912 Basketball team (N = 26). This paragraph is based upon the additional data gathered on these athletes. We are indebted to Shirley J. Botkins, Archives and Records Manager, Archives and Records Retention Center of the Jefferson County Public Schools (hereafter cited as Archives and Records) for the long hours she spent searching through the Original Attendance Records list of several

Louisville Public and Private Schools for Y.M.C.A. athletes.

⁴⁰*Annual Report*, 1892.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Minutes, March 20, 1892; April 6, 1892. See also *The Young Man*, September 30, 1892; October 21, 1892; December 21, 1892; April 22, 1893; May 6, 1893; May 20, 1893; June 3, 1893. *The Young Man*, was the Louisville Y.M.C.A.'s weekly bulletin. It was published between the months of September and June.

⁴⁴Minutes, April 6, 1892. The Minutes do not provide the Board of Directors reasons for beginning the baseball program beyond the fact of membership demand. See also *Annual Report-1892*; *Annual Report*, 1893.

⁴⁵*The Young Man*, March 15, 1892; April 22, 1892; May 6, 1892; May 20, 1892; October 20, 1892.

⁴⁶*The Young Man*, March 15, 1892; April 22, 1892; March 10, 1893.

⁴⁷*The Young Man*, April 22, 1892.

⁴⁸*The Young Man*, June 3, 1892.

⁴⁹*The Young Man*, April 29, 1892; February 26, 1892; March 4, 1892.

⁵⁰*The Courier Journal*, May 1, 1892. *The Courier Journal* was the major newspaper in Louisville during the period.

⁵¹*The Courier Journal*, May 6, 1892.

⁵²*The Young Man*, May 6, 1892.

⁵³*The Courier Journal*, May 6, 1892; May 8, 1892; May 10, 1892; May 15, 1892. The May 10, 1892 story especially ridiculed the Y.M.C.A.

⁵⁴*The Young Man*, May 6, 1892.

⁵⁵*The Courier Journal*, May 13, 1892.

⁵⁶*The Courier Journal*, June 3, 1892.

⁵⁷*The Courier Journal*, June 12, 1892; June 16, 1892; *The Young Man*, September 16, 1892; September 23, 1892; September 30, 1892.

⁵⁸We traced each of these players to earlier teams and sport organizations through *The Courier Journal*. Specific references are too numerous to cite. See various issues of *The Courier Journal* beginning in March of 1888 and running through September of 1892.

⁵⁹*The Courier Journal*, June 10, 1892; June 17, 1892. *The Courier Journal* reported the success of the "Triangles" during June and July of 1892.

⁶⁰*The Courier Journal*, July 3, 1892; *The Young Man*, July 4, 1892.

⁶¹Minutes, October 12, 1892; October 25, 1892.

⁶²*Minutes*, October 12, 1892; October 25, 1892.

⁶³*Minutes*, June 13, 1893.

⁶⁴Place of residence, job title, and work location were traced through City Directories. All team members worked in the central business district within a 5 block radius of the Y.M.C.A. Age data were collected through Original Census reports for 1900. All team members were between the ages of 19 and 25.

⁶⁵ *The Courier Journal*, July 3, 1893.

⁶⁶*Minutes*, November 7, 1892; November 28, 1892. See also *Annual Report*, 1892 and *The Young Man*, October 21, 1892. Danner affirmed that the Y.M.C.A.'s official policy of athleticism was the basis for the new rules.

⁶⁷*The Young Man*, March 14, 1892; April 22, 1892; May 4, 1892; May 20, 1892; September 16, 1892; October 21, 1892. Cf. *Minutes*, June 13, 1893 and *Annual Report*, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898. The Board of Directors were aware of the continuing demand for competition against outside teams.

⁶⁸For specific examples of Louisville Y.M.C.A. policies see *Minutes*, January 27, 1891; March 31, 1891; May 26, 1891; January 2, 1894; April 10, 1894; May 28, 1894; May 7, 1895. For an interpretation of Y.M.C.A. policies and their impact upon program development see the annual reports of McNair and Danner in *Annual Report*. 1892 and 1893. For a more philosophical view see *The Young Man*, January 11, 1895; June 14, 1895. We believe that McNair wrote the explanations of the Y.M.C.A. program policies that appeared in *The Young Man*.

⁶⁹*The Courier Journal* documents the popularity of athletic competition in Louisville beginning in 1888 and continuing through 1912. *Annual Reports* document the popularity of athletic competition among Y.M.C.A. members. We used City Directories and Original Census reports to find information about nationality, residence, job title, and place of work. Between the years of 1892 and 1912 approximately 1100 Y.M.C.A. athletes were traced. The largest groups identified by nationality were German (43%) and Irish (23%). Nearly 70% of Y.M.C.A. athletes lived in the Third or Eighth wards.

⁷⁰There was a very strong German community in Louisville. There was a strong sense of German identity. Despite the fact that the Third and the Eighth wards were part of the larger Louisville community, many residents retained a provincial outlook. The Third ward, for example, was known to locals as Germantown. To many German and Irish athletes the Y.M.C.A. was their Y.M.C.A.; Y.M.C.A. athletic teams were their teams. Ludwig Stierlin, *The State of Kentucky and the City of Louisville with Special Consideration of the German Element* (Louisville: n.p., 1873). We used a typescript copy of John Wiszart's translation of Stierlin's work in the University of Louisville Archives. Stierlin was the editor of *The Louisville Anziger* and documented the beginnings and early development of German provincialism in Louisville. Cf. J. Stoddard Johnston, *Memorial History of Louisville*. 2 vols. (Louisville: Courier Job Printing Press, 1896). George H. Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio: A History of Louisville and Jefferson County* (Louisville: Courier Job Printing Press, 1979), pp. 58-65.

⁷¹*The Young Man*, February 3, 1892.

⁷²Danner published position statements in *The Young Man* during 1892 and 1893. We believe that these position statements were directed at athletes rather than Board Members.

⁷³*The Young Man*, March 10, 1893.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶*The Young Man*, April 21, 1893; May 5, 1893; June 9, 1893; September 29, 1893; November 24, 1893; January 19, 1894; February 16, 1894; February 28, 1894; March 11, 1894; September 27, 1894. We believe that the recruitment arguments for sport and athletic programs were directed at the Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors. See *Minutes*, April 10, 1894; April 17, 1894, May 5, 1894. During these meetings Board members questioned the extent of athletic program offerings and expressed concerns about money, memberships, and programs.

⁷⁷*The Young Man*, October 21, 1892; December 23, 1892; May 19, 1893; May 26, 1893; June 2, 1893; September 15, 1893; October 13, 1893; October 27, 1893; November 24, 1893; March 16, 1894; March 30, 1894; June 14, 1895.

⁷⁸*The Young Man*, April 5, 1892; June 3, 1892; October 21, 1892; December 23, 1892; May 26, 1893; June 9, 1893; September 15, 1893.

⁷⁹*Annual Report*, 1893.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹*The Young Man*, November 3, 1893; November 10, 1893; November 17, 1893; November 24, 1893.

⁸²*The Young Man*, November 3, 1893.

⁸³*The Young Man*, November 10, 1893.

⁸⁴*The Young Man*, November 24, 1893.

⁸⁵*The Young Man*, December 1, 1893; December 7, 1893; December 14, 1893; December 21, 1893; December 28, 1893.

⁸⁶*The Young Man*, January 5, 1894.

⁸⁷*The Young Man*, February 14, 1894; March 4, 1894; March 11, 1894; May 5, 1894; May 18, 1894; June 8, 1894; November 9, 1894; January 1, 1895.

⁸⁸*The Young Man*, February 14, 1894; March 11, 1894; May 5, 1894; June 8, 1894, November 9, 1894.

⁸⁹*The Young Man*, March 4, 1894; March 11, 1894; May 18, 1894; June 8, 1894; November 9, 1894; January 1, 1895.

⁹⁰By emphasis we mean the number of sport and athletic opportunities offered through the Y.M.C.A.'s Physical Department program. Faced with financial difficulties the Board of Directors began to question whether the Y.M.C.A. offered too many athletic opportunities and whether Physical Department programs enhanced or competed with other Y.M.C.A. programs. See *Minutes*, March 12, 1895; May 7, 1895; May 14, 1895;

December 16, 1895; March 10, 1896; July 31, 1896. Prior to March, 1895 questions had been raised about the emphasis placed on sport and athletic programs. Earlier concerns dealt with curbing programs not eliminating them. See *Minutes*, June 13, 1893.

⁹¹*Minutes*, May 14, 1895; December 10, 1895; March 16, 1897; May 18, 1897; September 21, 1897; January 18, 1898.

⁹²*Minutes*, December 10, 1895; May 18, 1897; September 21, 1895; January 18,

⁹³*Minutes*, May 14, 1895; December 10, 1895; March 16, 1897; May 18, 1897; September 21, 1897; January 18, 1898. The *Minutes* only summarize discussions. They do not provide information about who presented the arguments or about the length of the discussion.

⁹⁴Endorsements from former athletes and examples of the success of Y.M.C.A. athletes in the business world appeared periodically in *The Young Man* during the period under discussion. However, beginning in September of 1897 and ending in March of 1900 these kinds of legitimations appeared almost weekly.

⁹⁵*Minutes*, March 25, 1895; May 7, 1895; May 14, 1895; December 16, 1895.

⁹⁶*Minutes*, September 13, 1898. See also *The Courier Journal*, September 17, 1898.

⁹⁷*Minutes*, November 11, 1900; September 17, 1901; September 27, 1901. The September 27, 1901 meeting was a special meeting called by President Gathright to discuss the formation of a Y.M.C.A. football team.

⁹⁸*Minutes*, September 27, 1901. This meant, of course, that football team members would be drawn from the Y.M.C.A. pool of active members. Clearly, the Board was concerned about outside recruiting and professionalism.

⁹⁹*The Young Man*, October 14, 1901.

¹⁰⁰*The Young Man*, October 24, 1901; October 31, 1901; November 7, 1901; November 14, 1901; November 21, 1901; December 5, 1901; January 30, 1902; April 3, 1902; September 17, 1902; October 9, 1902; December 11, 1902.

¹⁰¹*The Young Man*, November 14, 1901; December 19, 1901; January 30, 1902; April 3, 1902; June 6, 1902; September 29, 1902; October 16, 1902; October 30, 1902; November 13, 1902; November 27, 1902; December 4, 1902.

¹⁰²It is unclear whether Mecklin was attempting to convince the Board of Directors or the football players and their followers. We speculate that Mecklin's arguments were directed at both groups.

¹⁰³*The Young Man*, December 19, 1901. Mecklin provided a weekly account of the football team's success. Each week he highlighted Y.M.C.A. play by play action. Once the "Y" team became state champions, Mecklin reminded readers of *The Young Man* that the Y.M.C.A. football team was the best in the state. See for example *The Young Man*, April 3, 1902. The football team picture frequently appeared as the cover for Physical Department programs and reports. See for example *The Young Man*, June 6, 1902. The State Championship was more hype than fact. The Y.M.C.A. football team played several college teams in the state. Depending on its record and depending on

whether it beat Centre College it declared itself state champion.

¹⁰⁴*The Young Man*, December 19, 1901.

¹⁰⁵*The Young Man*, December 5, 1902; December 12, 1902. In 1902 the Y.M.C.A. was expected to repeat as state champions. Unfortunately they lost the last game of the season to Centre College by a score of 2 to 0. Mecklin claimed that the Y.M.C.A. team lost because the Centre College team used "ringers."

¹⁰⁶The Y.M.C.A. received a good deal of positive publicity in *The Courier Journal* because of the success of the football team. 1901 coverage was typical. See *The Courier Journal*. October 1, 1901; October 2, 1901; October 6, 1901; October 7, 1901; October 13, 1901; October 16, 1901; October 18, 1901; October 19, 1901; October 20, 1901; October 22, 1901; October 25, 1901; October 26, 1901; October 27, 1901; October 29, 1901; November 1, 1901; November 2, 1901; November 6, 1901; November 7, 1901; November 8, 1901; November 9, 1901; November 22, 1901; November 23, 1901; November 24, 1901; November 25, 1901; November 26, 1901; November 27, 1901; November 28, 1901.

¹⁰⁷This was a recurrent theme of Mecklin's in *The Young Man*. Mecklin's most complete statement is in *Annual Report* 1901.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹*Minutes*, April 19, 1898.

¹¹⁰Participants in athletic, educational, and religious programs were frequently listed in *The Young Man*. No football players were found on lists of participants for other Y.M.C.A. programs. Periodically the *Minutes* listed new members. No football players were found on published lists of new members.

¹¹¹Both *The Courier Journal* and *The Young Man* provided lists of Y.M.C.A. football players occasionally, *The Courier Journal* provided background data on Y.M.C.A. football players. See *The Courier Journal*, October 7, 1901; October 25, 1901; November 28, 1902. Newspaper data were cross referenced with data obtained from the Archives and Records.

¹¹²*The Courier Journal* documented the Y.M.C.A.'s acquisition of new players to fill "weak positions." See *The Courier Journal*, October 25, 1901; October 26, 1901; October 27, 1901.

¹¹³Mecklin provided readers of *The Young Man* with play by play accounts of each game the Y.M.C.A. team played. We added up the yardage attributed to each player for each game.

¹¹⁴*The Courier Journal*, October 25, 1901. Archives and Records.

¹¹⁵Archives and Records.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹¹⁸*The Courier Journal*, October 25, 1901.

¹¹⁹Archives and Records.

¹²⁰We found Davis listed as a Bethel College player in *The Courier Journal*, October 14, 1900 and October 7, 1901.

¹²¹*The Courier Journal*, October 6, 1900; October 7, 1900; October 13, 1900; October 12, 1900; October 19, 1900; October 20, 1900; October 21, 1900; October 23, 1900; October 27, 1900; October 28, 1900.

¹²²*The Courier Journal*, October 2, 1901. The committees and the committee members are listed. We did not find any of the committee members on Y.M.C.A. membership lists.

¹²³Archives and Records. We used "Original Enrollment Records for the Manual Training School" and "The Manual Training School Scrapbook". Most of the Y.M.C.A. football players (80%) and most committee members (65%) had attended Manual Training School. City Directories helped to locate others. Nearly 90% of football program participants lived in the Third or Eighth wards. Over 60% worked in the central business district within easy walking distance of the Y.M.C.A.

¹²⁴Archives and Records. The "Original Enrollment Records for the Manual Training School" lists student's age, residence and parent's occupation. Nationality and occupation were found in the Original Census for 1900 and 1910. City Directories provided additional data on residence and occupation.

¹²⁵Archives and Records.

¹²⁶*Minutes*, December 16, 1902.

¹²⁷*Ibid.* There is evidence that members of the Y.M.C.A football team were actually splitting the gate receipts among themselves.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

¹²⁹*The Courier Journal*, February 5, 1910. Cf. *The Young Man*, February 10, 1910.

¹³⁰*The Courier Journal*, February 1, 1910; February 2, 1910; February 3, 1910; February 4, 1910.

¹³¹*The Courier Journal*, February 5, 1910.

¹³²*The Courier Journal*, February 9, 1910.

¹³³*Ibid.*

¹³⁴*The Courier Journal*, February 9, 1910; February 20, 1910.

¹³⁵*The Courier Journal*, February 6, 1910.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*

¹³⁷*Ibid.* Osborne's picture appeared at the top and center of the sport's page.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*

¹³⁹*The Courier Journal*, February 5, 1910; February 6, 1910.

¹⁴⁰*The Courier Journal*, February 5, 1910; February 6, 1910.

¹⁴¹*The Courier Journal*, February 14, 1910.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³*The Young Man*, February 17, 1910.

¹⁴⁴*The Courier Journal*, February 20, 1910.

¹⁴⁵Archives and Records.

¹⁴⁶Ibid. We used "Manual Training School Scrapbook" and "The Annual Reports of the Manual Training School" for the years 1896, 1899, 1900, and 1910.

¹⁴⁷*The Courier Journal*, February 5, 1910; February 27, 1910.

¹⁴⁸*The Courier Journal*, February 5, 1910; February 27, 1910.

¹⁴⁹*The Courier Journal*, February 20, 1910.

¹⁵⁰*The Young Man*, November 16, 1911.

¹⁵¹*The Young Man*, January 28, 1912. See also *The Courier Journal*, January 20, 1912.

¹⁵²*The Young Man*, February 27, 1913.

¹⁵³*The Courier Journal*, February 28, 1913.

¹⁵⁴*The Young Man*, June 3, 1892.

¹⁵⁵*The Young Man*, February 13, 1910.