

Alcohol and the Sportsperson: An Anomalous Alliance¹

Wray Vamplew

Sports Studies, University of Stirling

Published on the Internet, www.idrottsforum.org (ISSN 1652-7224) 2007-02-14

Copyright © Wray Vamplew 2007. All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purposes of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author.

Sport and alcohol is indeed an anomalous alliance, albeit so commonplace as to appear almost trivial, and thus superficially drained of any deeper significance. It is, however, of the utmost importance to recognize this as a very real problem. Historically, the culture of sport is closely associated with the consumption of alcohol, as is so often the case when men – and it usually was men in those early days of sports – get together to socialize; other examples of the situational logic in play here are political and trade union movements. In Sweden, the development of organized sports coincided with the rise of a particularly powerful temperance movement, which served to put a check on alcohol abuse in the sports movement as well, and the morality and mentality thus established has proven exceedingly robust. This is clearly evident in the documents outlining the alcohol policy of the Swedish Sports Confederation – and in the reactions from that powerful organization when the implementation of those policies is put into question.

In the UK the situation is different. The British temperance movements never came close to having the level of influence on popular alcohol consumption as their counterparts in Sweden. "Britain is a society with an alcohol problem", Wray Vamplew states in a concluding comment in his article, and refers to the harmful effects of alcohol abuse in terms of societal costs for health care and sick leave due to alcohol related diseases. Vamplew shows that the troublesome situation in present-day Britain is a logical outcome of an historical development, by using sports as a mirror image of society. There are a number of instances showing that alcohol played an important part for early as well as latter-day sports and sportspersons. The fact that the main sponsors of organized sports from early times were producers of alcoholic beverages, as well as public establishments for consumption of said beverages, is, of course, a crucial contribution to the emergence and perpetuation of the sports-alcohol nexus. Then again, the ambivalent attitude of the sports organizations has played an important part as well. This is also shown by the author, by means of a number of very telling empirical evidence, from football, cricket, rugby and horse racing.

Wray Vamplew presents us with a learned, instructive, occasionally entertaining, and often disturbing insight into British sporting culture, and he shows effectively why the problematic mixture of alcohol and sports must be taken very seriously indeed.

¹ This article is an extended version of part of a keynote address to the Sport and Alcohol: Understanding the Mix conference held at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand, February 2005. The author is grateful to the Leverhulme Trust who funded a research project on the relationship between sport and alcohol, some results of which were published in Tony Collins & Wray Vamplew, *Mud, sweat and beers: a cultural history of sport and alcohol* (Oxford, 2002).

Alcohol as a sports drug

Alcohol depresses the nervous system, impairs both motor ability and judgement, reduces endurance, and, as a diuretic, can disturb electrolyte balance and cause dehydration, all of which are detrimental to effective sports performance.² Contrast this with the view that ‘strong ale’ is the athlete’s drink and the advice that

with respect to liquors, they must always be taken cold; and home-brewed beer, old, but not bottled, is the best. A little red wine, however, may be given to those who are not fond of malt liquor, but never more than half a pint after dinner. The quantity of beer, therefore, should not exceed three pints during the whole day.³

Cider was also recommended as a base for a sweating liquor. Two standpoints but almost two centuries apart. The former view is modern conventional wisdom based on sports science research; the latter part of the training regimen of Captain Robert Barclay Allardice who gained fame in 1809 for winning a £16,000 challenge to run a thousand miles in a thousand hours.⁴

Barclay was not alone in his consumption of alcohol as an aid to strength and stamina. Another record-breaking pedestrian, Foster Powell, renowned for his walks from London to York and back in less than six days, was reported to take wine or brandy with water during his perambulations.⁵ Pugilists too took advantage of alcohol. Bottle holders at prize fights were instructed by Vincent Dowling, editor of *Bell’s Life in London*, that

A bottle of brandy-and-water should be in readiness when a stimulant becomes necessary after long exertion, but this should be used with moderation; and at times, especially in wet, cold weather, about a table-spoon of neat brandy may be given – this ought to be of the best quality.⁶

Doubtless on occasions alcohol was also used to give the fighters extra ‘bottom’ or courage.

The use of alcohol by athletes should be seen in the context of a society in which many of the population utilised alcoholic drinks as thirst quenchers or for physical stamina. Such drinks were seen as less dangerous than water which was both scarce and unsafe in rural areas and even more contaminated in the urban. Moreover it was generally believed that intoxicants imparted stamina: whenever extra energy was needed resort was had to alcohol.⁷

Such ideas took a long time to change. At the end of the nineteenth century cricketers still resorted to alcohol during a day’s play and were being advised that when playing on a hot day ‘beer and stout are too heady and heavy’ and ‘gin and ginger beer is too sickly sweet’ and that ‘shandy-gaff, sherry or claret and soda are the most thirst-quenching, the

2 For a full discussion see Robert D. Stainback, *Alcohol and sport* (Champaign, Ill., 1997), pp. 49-63 and Thomas Reilly, ‘Alcohol, anti-anxiety drugs and sport’, in David R. Mottram, *Drugs in sport* (London, 1996), pp. 144-172.

3 An Operator, *Selections from the fancy* (Boston, 1972: orig. 1828), pp. 78-82.

4 Peter Radford, *The celebrated Captain Barclay* (London, 2001).

5 *Say’s Weekly Journal*, 6 Oct. 1787.

6 Vincent Dowling, *Fistianana, or oracle of the ring* (London, 1868), p. 143.

7 Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, (Keele, 1994 edit.), pp. 38-40.

lightest and the cleanest to the palate'.⁸ A writer in 1890 suggested to Scottish footballers that

there can be no harm in a glass or two of sound ale or a little light wine such as hock or claret at dinner. The glass of port afterwards I confess I think unnecessary as long as the training process is well borne. If, however, a man shows any sign of falling with the state known as "overtrained", that is to say, when the reducing process is too rapid or too severe, a little port or dry champagne at meals may be found beneficial.⁹

The rowing expert, R.C. Lehman, noted that the Oxford boat-race crew in the 1890s were allowed a glass of draught beer or claret and water with their lunch, two glasses with their dinner, and a glass of port with their dessert. Occasionally, champagne was substituted for the other drinks, but only when they had 'been doing very hard work, or when they show evident signs of being over-fatigued, and require a fillip'.¹⁰ In the same decade H.L. Curtis suggested moderate consumption of alcohol as part of a sportsman's regime but warned against smoking and drinking coffee.¹¹

Yet by 1888, in his advice to athletes, Montague Shearman leaned towards the increasing trans-Atlantic tendency to adopt 'the system of training upon water alone, and taking no alcohol in any shape during training'. He left it to doctors to decide if alcohol was 'nutritious to any degree' but noted that it was universally acknowledged 'that it is very hard to digest, and this alone should be a strong argument against its use'. Nevertheless he accepted that if a sportsman was 'accustomed to drink beer or wine, it is a hard thing to say that the athlete should give up either and take to water if he doesn't like it'. He had seen men well trained 'upon beer, upon claret, and upon weak whisky-and-water'. However, he warned that 'any other wines ... are bad in training, as they excite the nerves and interfere with sound and quiet sleep'. He allowed that 'if a man is getting stale, good strengthening wine may do him a world of good', though he stressed that 'as long as an athlete is not in this state, the glass or two of port, which he often recommended to take, is exceedingly likely to do harm, and can hardly do any good'. All in all the 'general principle' should be 'the less alcohol ... the better'.¹² Writing slightly earlier, the Reverend Beveridge was adamant that

much liquid of any kind ought not to be imbibed by the training athlete; and there is one kind of liquid which must not be imbibed at all, namely that which is alcoholic in its nature. There is no use whatever of a man going into training if he intends, at the same time to use intoxicating liquors.¹³

Beveridge was a member of the teetotal lobby which claimed that 'medical science has proved beyond a doubt the injuriousness of spirituous liquors to the human frame.'¹⁴ This was countered by the *Licensed Trade News* which argued that 'the whole field of physical

8 A.G. Steel and R.H. Lyttelton, *Cricket* (London, 1893), pp. 212-3.

9 Medicus, 'Football from a medical point of view', *Scottish Football Annual 1889-90*, pp. 27-32.

10 R.C. Lehman, *Rowing* (London, 1898), pp. 115-117.

11 H.L. Curtis, *Principles of training for amateur athletics* (London, 1892).

12 Montague Shearman, *Athletics and football* (London, 1888), pp. 171-174.

13 *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 13 Oct. 1882.

14 John Weir, *Drink, religion and Scottish football* (Renfrew, 1992).

culture is filled with the best of men doing the best of work on alcohol in moderation'. It added that 'where moderation marks the guarded way, the result of alcoholic liquor consumed, such liquors as are represented by a good sound, wholesome glass of beer, there is nothing to come near it as a thirst quencher, a dietetic, a support and a stimulant'.¹⁵ Alcohol producers lent support to the trade. The 1880s saw the start of advertisements professing the fitness-aiding qualities of alcohol. Grant's Morella Cherry Brandy claimed that it 'strengthened and invigorated the system,' as was proved by Captain Boyton who drank it whilst swimming the Straits of Dover. Indeed the gallant captain was quoted as finding it 'not only palatable and refreshing, but most effective in keeping up nerve and strength'.¹⁶ Clearly the advice being provided for sportspersons was confusing and contradictory.

Such tensions continued. In the 1920s English cricketer Fred Root, after an arduous stint of bowling, was advised by the Chairman of Selectors, P.F. Warner, to utilise the brine baths at Droitwich and drink an occasional bottle of champagne. Health-giving qualities of alcohol were still being proclaimed in advertising campaigns in the interwar years, most notably in the Brewers' Society slogan 'Beer is Best' and Guinness's explicit promotion of itself as being good for strength.¹⁷ Nevertheless by this time generally athletes were being advised not to consume intoxicants on any scale as they were considered detrimental to sporting performance. Viscount Knebworth's advice to aspiring boxers in the early 1930s was that

any large consumption of alcohol is out of the question, but alcohol in moderation is a fine aid to the digestion. A glass of wine or a glass of beer with his supper does nobody any harm ... But no-one in training for a boxing match can afford to drink anything but a very minimum of alcoholic liquid.¹⁸

He was supported by Dr Alphonse Abrahams who maintained that 'alcohol may be given as a medicine, but a healthy athlete should not require medicine therefore alcohol is not needed for him.' However, in a portent of a modern argument for sportspersons to drink, he also declared 'the practice of giving champagne to the University boat crews serves some useful purpose in lessening the anxiety which often prevails before a race'.¹⁹

Sports scientists were winning the battle. By 1982 the influential American College of Sports Medicine had conducted an analysis of the effects of alcohol on physical performance and argued that it had four main adverse effects. First, the acute ingestion of alcohol deleteriously influenced many psychomotor skills in a dose-related manner, thus negatively affecting reaction time, eye-hand co-ordination, accuracy and balance; in tracking tasks, such as driving, control movements lost their smoothness and precision. Second, alcohol consumption significantly influenced physiological functions crucial to physical performance such as respiratory dynamics and cardiac activity. Third, the ingestion of alcohol did not improve muscular work capacity and indeed may have decreased performance levels.

15 *Licensed Trade News*, 27 Aug. 1910.

16 *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 1 Dec. 1885.

17 Jim Davies, *The book of Guinness advertising* (London, 1998), pp. 7, 16.

18 Viscount Knebworth, *Boxing* (London, 1931), p. 194.

19 Alphonse Abrahams in *The Practitioner*, quoted in *The British Deaf Sportsman* 6.1 April- June 1935.

Finally, because alcohol dilates the blood vessels close to the surface of the skin, it could impair temperature regulation during prolonged exercise in a cold environment.²⁰

Nonetheless there are those who believe that there are sporting benefits to alcohol consumption which outweigh the negative aspects. Although generally alcohol has adverse effects on performance in sports that require fast reactions, complex decision making, and highly-skilled actions, it is considered to have a positive influence on performance where there is an advantage to be gained from its use as an anti-tremor aid, as an isometric muscular strengthener, and as an anti-anxiety drug. For some individuals it is simply that small amounts of alcohol can reduce feelings of insecurity and tension and improve self-confidence. For some teams too the psychological and other aspects of drinking together may have positive outcomes. Tactical discussions in the bar at the end of a day's play – common among cricketers – is one example.²¹ In football the great Tottenham Hotspur side of the 1960s used to meet in the back room of the *Bell and Hare*, just off the ground, to dissect every move of the last game and look ahead to the next.²² Team bonding is another example. Pat Nevin, ex-chairman of the Professional Footballers Association, maintains that at the start of the football season this is sometimes more desired by managers than absolute fitness.²³ Teams are collections of individuals who may not necessarily get along with each other. On top of personality differences, there is the friction brought about by competition for places. Older players may be wary of newcomers, unwilling to pass on the lessons of experience for fear that it might hasten their journey down the inclined plane to sporting oblivion. The young bloods, aware that few of them will become established in the team, may not assist each other as much the coach might desire. Alcohol is sometimes regarded as a panacea to these problems in that drinking sessions are seen as a way of bringing team-mates together. These were often instigated by the older 'pros' but approved of by the club. Tony Parkes, who played for Spurs, Gillingham, Brentford, Queens Park Rangers, Fulham, West Ham, Stoke, Falkirk and Blackpool, found that drinking sessions were used at all these clubs as a forum to air grievances and give accolades.²⁴ In the 1980s Liverpool Football Club, a dominant team of the decade, used to hold social drinking sessions one Monday each month policed by the senior players.²⁵ Ron Atkinson, one of Britain's more successful managers in the last three decades, believed that 'drinking among team-mates ... creates dressing-room spirit'.²⁶ One of the new generation of British managers, David Moyes, has attributed a recent improvement in the performance of Everton to a pre-season trip to the US where 'we trained hard but had a good time together as well. We had a few drinks and some good old-fashioned sing-songs... all of a sudden you lose your inhibitions and everyone understands each other that bit more'.²⁷

For most participants sport is a recreational stress reliever, but for elite athletes it can be a stress-creator, often producing severe pre-competition anxiety. Not all athletes can cope unaided with this and some have resorted to anti-anxiety drugs, including alcohol. Dr Tom

20 Stainback, *Alcohol and sport*, pp. 49-63.

21 Simon Hughes, professional cricketer, quoted in Duncan Stewart, 'Alcohol, the ethical dilemma', (M.A. thesis, Warwick, 1997), p. 33.

22 Jimmy Greaves, *This one's on me* (Newton Abbot, 1979), p. 10.

23 Quoted in Stewart, 'Alcohol, the ethical dilemma', p. 49.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

25 'Real lives: Jan Molby', *Total Sport*, 17 Nov. 1999, p. 28.

26 Ron Atkinson, *Big Ron: a different ball game* (London, 1998), p. 95.

27 *Daily Telegraph*, 16 Oct. 2004.

Crisp, a medical officer for the British team at the Atlanta Olympic Games, believes ‘that there may even be benefits (to drinking a week or so before a major competition) in terms of relaxation and social interaction ... I think if you look at professional sportsmen they are under a great deal of pressure, and alcohol is quite a good way of relaxing’.²⁸ That sherry was a useful pre-match drink was a prevalent belief in rugby in the 1950s and 1960s: at noon on match days Jeff Butterfield, an England rugby union back, drank a pint pot of raw eggs and sherry and as late as 1989 rugby league player Andrew Ettingshausen noted that a sherry bottle was passed around the Leeds dressing room before matches.²⁹ The communal whisky bottle too has featured in football changing rooms prior to the game.³⁰ Darts players also often resort to alcohol to calm their nerves. Leighton Rees, the Welsh international darts player, reckoned that a couple of pints of beer helped steel him up for a match.³¹ World Champion Andy Fordham usually has fifteen bottles of lager before each game to reduce his nervousness and increase his confidence.³²

Some sports require steady hands as well as steady nerves. The sedative effect of alcohol can be useful where a firm stance and a reduced heart rate could be important. Predominantly these are ‘aiming’ sports such as shooting, archery, snooker, darts and fencing. However, there is greater benefit where the apparatus involved puts least pressure on the arm, so darts throwers gain more than pistol shooters who are better off than archers.³³ As the bar-room sport of darts has moved to a larger stage the technique that has developed among the more successful players is one of regular small ‘topping up’ doses of alcohol so as to avoid fluctuating blood alcohol concentrations.³⁴ Reaction times are, however, slowed by alcohol consumption so there is no tradition of its use in aiming sports with moving targets such as clay-pigeon shooting.³⁵

In horse racing alcohol is seen as offering two specific kinds of help to jockeys. Many of them drink champagne before going into the sauna in the belief that it helps them sweat.³⁶ Traditionally too the French sparkling wine has been used to keep down their weight. In the early nineteenth century Frank Butler, the first Triple Crown winner, followed a diet of champagne to help restrict his weight to 8 stones 7 pounds.³⁷ Later in that century, Fred Archer, champion jockey for thirteen successive seasons, allegedly breakfasted on a diet of castor oil, a biscuit and a small glass of champagne for the bulk of his racing life.³⁸ In more modern times Lester Piggott, champion on eleven occasions, also used champagne in this way but with the occasional gin and tonic as a change.³⁹ Although nutrition research indicates that, as alcohol contains calories, drinking can impair any weight reduction pro-

28 Quoted in Stewart, ‘Alcohol, the ethical dilemma’, p. 46.

29 *Guardian*, 21 Feb. 1997; *Rugby League Week* (Sydney), 16 June 1999, p. 6.

30 Reilly, ‘Alcohol, anti-anxiety drugs and sport’, p. 147; Stewart, ‘Alcohol, the ethical dilemma’ p. 73.

31 Peter Arnold, *Darts* (London, 1984), p. 66.

32 *Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 21 March 2004, p.29.

33 Reilly, ‘Alcohol, anti-anxiety drugs and sport’, p. 156.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 155.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 158.

36 Mark Johnston, racehorse trainer, Radio 5, 4 June 1998. See also Wray Vamplew & Joyce Kay, *Encyclopedia of British horseracing* (London: 2005), 11-12.

37 Michael Tanner & Gerry Cranham, *Great jockeys of the flat* (Enfield, 1992), p. 46.

38 John Welcome, *Fred Archer: a complete study*, (London, 1990), p. 29.

39 Lester Piggott, *Lester* (London, 1995), pp. 16, 38.

gramme even if food intake is reduced, the very small amounts that jockeys take can be seen simply as a psychologically satisfying alternative to food.⁴⁰

Sporting culture and alcohol abuse

British sportspeople exist within a society in which, subject to age limits, alcohol is a socially accepted drug which has become engrained in leisure activities. Like other members of society, sportspersons use alcohol for relaxation, to relieve stress, and for convivial recreational purposes. Historically some sports organisations such as the Royal Caledonian Hunt Club were in effect drinking clubs more concerned with the quality of the wine than that of the horses.⁴¹ Amateur sports teams have a long tradition of treating each other to refreshments, alcoholic or otherwise, after a match. That so many early football and cricket clubs were attached to public houses by sponsorship, changing rooms, or ground provision both encouraged and facilitated this.⁴² Possibly, of course, this treating was a means of paying supposedly amateur players. Significantly the move into professionalism in football in the late nineteenth century undermined the alcoholic reciprocity between clubs, though Dumbarton, for one, elected to continue the after-match socials whenever the opposing team was agreeable, as they felt ‘that it would be a pity should it ever be considered necessary – on account of the demands of professionalism, or for any other reason – to eliminate every source of relaxation and enjoyment from the life of the football player, and reduce the game to a mere sordid pursuit’.⁴³ County cricketer, Fred Root noted that there were plenty ‘thirst-quenching opportunities’ in police cricket matches in the 1920s.⁴⁴ The bar has in fact become a major source of revenue for many sports clubs. From the outset of Leamington Rugby Club in 1926 there was a bar. Initially simply a table from which bottles of beer were sold, by the late 1990s it generated gross profits of £66,000 some six times the amounts raised from members’ subscriptions.⁴⁵ Golf clubs too have benefited from the laxer licensing laws applied to membership clubs compared to public houses.⁴⁶ At the Goring and Streatley Golf Club bar takings produced 6 per cent of the club’s revenue in 1938, a proportion that had risen to 11 per cent by 1994.⁴⁷ The increased importance of bar profits has of course provided sports clubs with an incentive to encourage members and players to drink.

Sportspeople know that drinking can be both bad for their health and inimical to sporting performance. Yet teetotallers are probably in a minority in British sport.⁴⁸ Many of the sportspersons who drink are well aware of the negative influence that alcohol can have on their sporting function, but often those involved are not concerned with achieving their best possible performance. They are participating for fun, aiming to win but not at the sacrifice

40 Steve Wootton, *Nutrition for sport* (London, 1989), p. 113.

41 Joyce Kay, ‘From coarse to course: the first fifty years of the Royal Caledonian Hunt, 1777-1826’, *Review of Scottish Culture*, 13 (2000-2001), pp. 30-39.

42 On the Scottish football situation see Weir, *Drink, religion and Scottish football*.

43 *Scottish Sport*, 4 Sept. 1893 quoted in Weir, *Drink, religion and Scottish football*, footnote 23.

44 Root, *A cricket pro’s lot*, p. 23.

45 Stewart, ‘Alcohol, the ethical dilemma’, p. 13.

46 B.T., ‘The licensing Act 1902 and golf clubs’, *Golf Illustrated*, 25 March 1910, p.11.

47 *Goring and Streatley golf club: the first hundred years, 1895-1995*, (Goring, 1995), p. 109.

48 Stewart, ‘Alcohol, the ethical dilemma’, p. 29.

of the social side of their chosen sport or club. Sunday league football with teams such as Real Ale Madrid and PSV Hangover whose matches end before opening time are a prime example.⁴⁹ Similarly Justin Langer, the Australian test cricketer, has observed that English league cricket is a place ‘to learn more about enjoying a pint of beer and having a few laughs’ than to develop the skills to become a contender for the first class game.⁵⁰ Stewart has argued that drinking is almost a membership norm in many amateur sports and Reilly has identified rugby, squash and water polo as sports where there is a such a social convention and peer group pressure to drink alcohol after both training and matches and at club functions.⁵¹

Sociologists Dunning and Waddington have identified a Dionysian/Epicurean element in sport in which masculinity is demonstrated by a combination of sporting physicality and an ability to drink copious amounts of alcohol.⁵² Yet drinking beyond moderate consumption levels is not just a male prerogative. A recent report in Britain has shown that young women are now more likely to binge drink than their male counterparts.⁵³ This is becoming reflected in sport where there is some evidence that women are following where men have staggered. Female footballers and rugby union players at both recreational and elite level have developed a drinking culture with some associated misbehaviour. Additionally a recent study has shown that athletic initiation ceremonies at British universities have been normalised and for both men and women involve excessive consumption of alcohol.⁵⁴

Some elite sportspersons perhaps are not persuaded that the case against moderate drinking has been established. Certainly it is less publicised than that against excessive imbibing and the evidence suggests that such consumption has neither beneficial nor detrimental effects on physical performance and that light drinking even on the night before competition will not significantly diminish performance the following morning.⁵⁵ In any case, with their physical prowess and fitness, young athletes in particular can see themselves as immune from the addictive and adverse effects of alcohol. Certainly sportsmen can disguise the level of their alcohol consumption because of their physical fitness.⁵⁶ In the mid-nineteenth century ‘Stonehenge’, a writer on rural sports, cited instances of young men drinking one to two gallons of strong ale a day for many months ‘without any great injury’. It was, he added, ‘astonishing what quantities of intoxicating drinks may be imbibed without much injury, provided that a corresponding amount of exercise is taken’.⁵⁷ In team sports the adverse effects of drinking may not be so obvious as in say marathon running or other endurance events. Australian rugby league player, Ken Thornett, recalled that on occasions when playing in England in the early 1950s he had ‘drunk seven or eight pints of Tetley’s

49 See Pete May, *Sunday muddy Sunday*, London, 1998.

50 *Independent on Sunday*, 1 July 1999.

51 Reilly, ‘Alcohol, anti-anxiety drugs and sport’, p. 153.

52 Eric Dunning & Ivan Waddington, ‘Sport as a drug and drugs in sport’, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 38.3 (2003), p. 356.

53 *Daily Telegraph*, 15 December 2004.

54 Pete Davies, *I lost my heart to the Belles* (London, 1997), passim; J. Macbeth, *Women’s football in Scotland: an interpretive study* (Ph.D. thesis, Stirling, 2004) passim; Alison Carle & John Nauright, ‘Crossing the line: women playing rugby union’ in Timothy J.L. Chandler & John Nauright, *Making the rugby world* (London, 1999), pp. 128-148; Dunning & Waddington, ‘Sport as a drug’, pp. 356-357.

55 Stainback, *Alcohol and sport*, p. 67; Wootton, *Nutrition for sport*, p. 159

56 See comments of Dr. Gordon Morse of Cloud House, a Wiltshire residential addiction centre. *Daily Telegraph*, 13 October 1998.

57 Stonehenge, *Manual of British rural sports* (London, 1857), p. 445.

bitter on a Friday night and played well enough the next day'.⁵⁸ Jimmy Greaves, the alcoholic English football international, noted that 'people would see me competing at sport and never believe that they were watching somebody who within the past forty-eight hours had knocked back two bottles of vodka and a couple of gallons of beer.'⁵⁹ Paul Merson of Arsenal and England was able to win the Young Player of the Year award in 1989 despite long late-night drinking sessions.⁶⁰

One problem at the elite level is that fans have always been willing to buy drinks for their heroes. In the early 1880s a commentator on golf felt that 'treating' of professionals was too common.⁶¹ A decade later, county cricket administrators complained about the public buying drinks for their cricketing champions, one of the downsides of players remaining close to their communities.⁶² Indeed the Yorkshire chairman claimed that the 'demon drink' had cost his side the county championship and the Warwickshire secretary appealed to the public not to treat the county's professionals.⁶³ Bill Appleyard of Newcastle United, in *Thomson's Weekly News* in February 1902, and John Cameron, one-time secretary of the Players' Union writing in *Spaldings Football Annual* four years later, both felt that treating by admirers was a great temptation to footballers.⁶⁴

Sportspersons sometimes abuse alcohol. Populist press exposés of alcohol-fuelled misdemeanours by modern footballers provide a seemingly endless catalogue of hotel smashing, sexual impropriety, and drunken driving.⁶⁵ Historically perhaps this has always been the case but possibly the media used to be less intrusive. However, there is some suggestion that misbehaviour by inebriated footballers is nothing new. In 1883 the *Scottish Athletic Journal* criticised the 'high jinks in hotels by football teams [that] are becoming such a nuisance that something must be done to put an end to the gross misconduct which goes on'.⁶⁶ Five years earlier two Queens Park players had been fined 20 shillings each for disorderly conduct after a victorious match in Nottingham.⁶⁷ Indeed trips down south of the border, usually taken at New Year or Easter, allegedly often resulted in 'drunken orgies'.⁶⁸ At the end of the century it was claimed that 'nearly every club in Glasgow had had from time to time difficulties with its players because of the intemperance by which they are beset'.⁶⁹ Then there is the Heart of Midlothian goalkeeper who let in seven goals when in 'a peculiar condition'.⁷⁰ Things were no better in England. Writing in 1909, Jimmy Wilson of Preston North End noted that 'we all know the bugbear of a footballer's career is alcohol ... perhaps it is not generally known to how great an extent such a state of affairs does exist. One has only to make his way to one or two well-known hotels to see it

58 Ken Thornett (with Tom Easton), *Tackling rugby*, (Melbourne, 1965), p. 121.

59 Greaves, *This one's on me*, p. 77.

60 Paul Merson (with Harry Harris), *Rock bottom* (Bloomsbury, 1995), p. 37.

61 Letter from 'Scratch Medal', *The Field* Oct. 1881. I am grateful to Peter N. Lewis, Director of the British Golf Museum for this reference.

62 Minutes of Lancashire C.C.C., 31 Jan. 1890; Minutes of Leicester C.C.C., 11 June 1894.

63 *Cricket*, IX (1890), p. 93; Leslie Duckworth, *The Story of Warwickshire cricket* (London, 1974), p. 49.

64 I am grateful to John Harding, historian of the PFA, for these references.

65 For surveys see Russ Williams, *Football Babylon* (London, 1990); Denis Campbell, Pete May & Andrew Shields, *The lad done bad* (Harmondsworth, 1996); and Andrew Shields, 'Some people are on the piss', *Total Sport*, Dec. 1996, pp. 94-102.

66 *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 30 March 1883. Cited in Weir, *Drink, religion and Scottish football*.

67 *North British Daily Mail*, 22 Jan. 1878.

68 *Scottish Athletic Journal*, 26 Aug. 1885.

69 *Scottish Sport*, 8 April 1898.

70 Minutes of Heart of Midlothian F.C., 28 Nov.1902.

for themselves.⁷¹ H.G. Norris of Fulham maintained that players ‘are not always fit to undergo ninety minutes of strenuous football on Saturdays, due to indiscretions committed during the previous week, the greatest and most frequent cause being drink’.⁷² For many years some footballers out on the town, free of partner, with money in their pockets have done stupid things under the influence of alcohol. But then so have many other young men. Their antics, however, generally go unreported so it is hard to establish whether the relationship of footballers with alcohol is particularly unique.

Alcohol was an integral part of another sport. Most golf clubs sought to develop the ‘nineteenth hole’ within their clubhouse. Not only could this offer members a social refuge but bar takings could contribute to the coffers of the club. Professionals, however, were excluded from the clubhouse except when acting as steward. Most golf professionals thus did their drinking away from the course. Too much so according to one observer who drew ‘attention to one serious evil which has almost invariably accompanied ... professional golf. I refer to the almost universal drunkenness with which it is attended.’⁷³ That some professionals had a reputation for over imbibing is also reflected in a novel by golf writer Horace Hutchinson.⁷⁴ The professionals referred to in both instances seem to be those whose employment was irregular and to whom a windfall gain might well be spent on celebratory drink. As the popularity of golf increased so did job prospects for the club professional. Even tournament players whose earnings could fluctuate wildly had their club retainer to fall back upon. Moreover the growth in the number of tournaments enlarged the possibility of making some money from competitive play. That said, a reading of golf club histories does suggest that several club professionals continued to risk their careers by drinking. Employed as club professional, greenkeeper and caddie superintendent, Ramsay Hunter of Royal St Georges was demoted to greenkeeper in 1899 because of his drinking and then was sacked for repeating the offence.⁷⁵ Sidney Humphries had cause to thank the Muskerry committee for only reprimanding him when he ‘neglected his work through drinking and associating with bad characters’. He ‘promised to abstain entirely from drink in the future’ but soon had resorted back to the bottle and was given notice.⁷⁶

Nevertheless it may be that footballers have always had more opportunity than most professional sportsmen to indulge in drinking. Unlike golfers, who had to spend most of their time on course maintenance and playing with club members, and cricketers, who often had a full day’s play several times a week with travel to follow, professional footballers have always had time on their hands. The training regimes operated by many clubs demanded attendance at the ground for only a few hours a day. Indeed a typical pre-1914 training programme would involve nothing at all on Monday; on other days a 10.00 a.m. arrival time with a brisk five mile walk to follow unless the weather was inclement when there might be skipping or Indian club and punchball work.⁷⁷ Little changed over the century. As Mick Quinn, footballer turned racehorse trainer, noted ‘footballers have time to kill. Time to go to the bookies, pub or snooker club. They have the afternoon and whole night.’⁷⁸ The situ-

71 *Weekly News*, 24 April 1909.

72 *Temperance Herald*, February 1909.

73 Letter from ‘Scratch Medal’, *The Field* Oct. 1881.

74 Horace Hutchinson, *Bert Edward the Golf Caddie* (London, 1903).

75 Gerald Watts, *Royal St Georges* (Sandwich, 1996), p. 201.

76 Minutes of Muskerry Golf Club, 10 April, 29 June and 4 Dec. 1911.

77 W. I. Bassett, ‘The day’s work’ in *The book of football* (London, 1906), pp. 110-113.

78 *Observer*, 6 Sept. 1998.

ation has been accentuated in more modern times with the abolition of wage restraint and the spiralling of earnings. Football manager, Ron Atkinson, recalls some hard drinkers in the immediate pre Second World War period, but he is also of the view that there has been a change in the past couple of generations of players with some 'wild drinking' by young star players whom he has seen 'at certain football functions quite literally drinking themselves into oblivion'.⁷⁹ Long-serving manager, Bobby Robson, has also seen 'booze as one of the major evils of the game. And its influence has become more widespread now there is big money to be earned'.⁸⁰ Mark Bennett of the charity Alcohol Concern puts it clearly: 'when you get young men earning enormous sums of money, with enormous amounts of free time and a heavy drinking culture, you have some key indications for an alcohol problem'.⁸¹

Sporting pressure and alcoholism

Modern footballers, Tony Adams, Paul Gascoigne and Paul Merson, have publicly acknowledged their alcoholism.⁸² Predecessors shared their affliction. Albert Johanneson, the first black player to appear in a Wembley cup final, died aged fifty-five of alcohol-related causes. Former Irish and Scottish internationalists George Best and Jim Baxter both had transplants because of the damage that alcohol had done to their livers.⁸³ Jimmy Greaves of England eventually beat the booze but at one point in his life he found himself 'in the early hours of a frosty winter's morning ... ransacking the dustbin ... for empty vodka bottles ... and finished up kneeling by the side of the dustbin draining the last drops out of the bottles'.⁸⁴

It is not just in football that alcoholism has found victims. To take contrasting examples: in horseracing, leading flat and jump riders Steve Cauthen (twice champion jockey), Walter Swinburn and Timmy Murphy (jailed for a drink-related assault) and in snooker world champion Alex Higgins and title contender Jimmy White have all acknowledged having drinking problems.⁸⁵ Nor is the issue one just of modern times. Pugilist Henry Pearce, the 'Game Chicken', made 'too free with his constitution' and 'in company with sporting men frequently he poured down copious libations at the shrine of Bacchus' so that 'his health was impaired'.⁸⁶ It is also clear that in Victorian horseracing Bill Scott, winner of nine St Legers, and George Fordham, fourteen times champion jockey, were alcoholics as were

79 Atkinson, *Big Ron*, pp. 94, 97.

80 *Independent on Sunday*, 10 Sept. 1995.

81 *Daily Telegraph*, 13 Oct. 1998.

82 Tony Adams (with Ian Ridley), *Addicted* (London, 1998); Paul Gascoigne (with Hunter Davies), *Gazza* (London, 2004); Merson, *Rock bottom*.

83 *Daily Telegraph*, 13 October 1998.

84 Greaves, *This one's on me*, p. 2.

85 Wray Vamplew, 'Still crazy after all those years: continuity in a changing labour market for professional jockeys', *British Journal of Contemporary History* 14.2 (2000), p. 144; *Guardian* 6 Dec. 2004; Bill Borrows, *The Hurricane* (London, 2003); Tony Rushmer, 'Cue Jimmy', *Total Sport*, (April 1999), pp. 57-61.

86 John Ford, *Boxiana*, (London, 1976), p. 85.

Tommy Loates, champion in three seasons towards the end of the century, and Bernard Dillon, the Derby-winning rider in 1910.⁸⁷

Whether professional sportsmen have a greater tendency towards alcoholism than other occupational groups is conjectural given the inadequate statistical information. However there are features of a career in sport that could encourage its emergence in those participants genetically or otherwise predisposed towards the addiction.⁸⁸

In some sports there are job specific issues. In professional football there is an expectation that players will turn out even when injured and in pain.⁸⁹ In cricket there is the monotony of what could till recently be a six or seven-days-a-week job.⁹⁰ In horseracing the low weights required can cause problems as the effects of alcohol are often aggravated by the lack of food: indeed nutrition expert Professor Michael Lean suggests that 'alcoholism is a probable effect of being starved'.⁹¹ More generally in most sports there are problems associated with the pressures of performance, constant job insecurity and retirement at an early age.

There is no place to hide on the sports field. Every time they play sportspersons are subject to public and professional appraisal; and often their performance depends not just on themselves but on their team-mates and on the opposition.⁹² Jimmy Greaves drank heavily when with Spurs in the 1960s 'to help relieve the pressures of big-time football'.⁹³ Pat Nevin argues that when off-form players are booed by the crowd, castigated in the media, and have their families harassed by fans '... one of the reasons why players turn to a few drinks is to cope with [this] stress'.⁹⁴ Cricket is a team game within which the individual is often isolated, worrying about his own form even in the midst of team success: as is clear from David Frith's study of cricketing suicides, some could not handle the pressure of perpetual uncertainty and turned to drink.⁹⁵

Indeed insecurity is the hallmark of a career in professional sport. It stems from many sources including fear of injury, loss of form, threats to jobs from newcomers, and the inevitable short shelf-life of professional sportsmen. Every day the professional faces the possibility of no work tomorrow: losing in a tight finish, dropping an important catch, being injured in a tackle can all lead to non-selection. Historically too there was, and for some players still is, the annual trauma of contract renewal. Writing in the 1930s, English professional cricketer Fred Root remarked on the 'extreme anxiety' among young players

87 For allegations of alcoholism see Roger Mortimer, Richard Onslow & Peter Willett, *Biographical encyclopedia of British flat racing* (London, 1978), pp. 174, 219; Frances Collingwood, 'The tragedy of Thomas Loates', *The British Racehorse*, Oct. 1967, pp. 427-8.

88 According to Stephen Stephens, Director of the Addictions Unit at Marchmont Priory Hospital, Southampton, 'the fact is that we don't really know why some people become addicts and others don't'. Quoted in Merson, *Rock bottom*, p. 2. Henri Begleiter, an American researcher, estimates that genes perhaps account for 40-60 per cent of the risk of alcoholism.. *New Scientist*, 27 Nov. 1999, pp. 39-43.

89 Martin Roderick, Ivan Waddington & Graham Parker, 'Playing hurt: managing injuries in English professional football', *International Review of Sports Sociology* 35.2 (2000), pp. 165-180.

90 Peter Roebuck, *It never rains ... a cricketer's lot* (London, 1984), passim.

91 Jocelyn Targett, 'Slim chance', *Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 29 Nov. 1998.

92 For an account of such pressures across a range of elite sports see Angela Patmore, *Sportmen under stress* (London, 1986). For an historical view see Wray Vamplew, *Pay up and play the game* (Cambridge, 2004 edition), pp. 217-232. For a specific case study of footballer Stan Collymore see Stephen Wagg, "'With his money I could afford to be depressed": markets, masculinity and mental distress in the English football press', *Football Studies* 3.2 (2000), pp. 67-87.

93 Greaves, *This one's on me*, p. 5.

94 Quoted in Stewart, 'Alcohol, the ethical dilemma', p. 46.

95 David Frith, *By his own hand: a study of cricket's suicides* (London, 1991).

brought about by counties often delaying their announcements on future engagements until the middle of winter.⁹⁶ Most jockeys, even today, do not have retainers and have to compete for mounts in a vastly oversupplied labour market.⁹⁷ In many cases the professional has no control over his own destiny: a new manager or coach can lead to redundancy. Seniority offers no security: there are always rivals for their position and the decision as to the relative abilities of the old hand and the newcomer is a subjective one made by others.

Then there is the question of retirement, often involuntary and generally at an early age relative to conventional retirees. For some it comes even earlier than expected because of the socially-sanctioned violence on the field which can cause career-ending damage. Even in non-contact sports there can be serious industrial injuries. Jockey Club statistics show that a rider can expect a fall every fourteen rides over jumps and hurdles and an injury every eighty.⁹⁸ It is paradoxical that a professional sportsperson must be fit to pursue their occupation but injuries often occur simply because they are playing sport. All sportsmen, of course, have built-in obsolescence. Sport is a physical activity and eventually experience no longer compensates for ageing bodies. Once their athletic peak is passed many find themselves on a slide to obscurity. Some find it difficult to adjust to a life cut off from their previous mainline activity, an atypical lifestyle of training and competition. Few life experiences can offer the intensity and excitement of sporting competition and for some alcohol may replace this stimulation; for others drink might be part of self-mediation during the pain of the transition period. Michael Caulfield, late Executive Manager of the Jockeys Association, has suggested that the real alcohol problem among jockeys emerges after their retirement when income, status and ego all decline.⁹⁹ Greaves says that his 'real drinking' started only after he quit League football and realised that at thirty-one he had done so prematurely and 'in my frustration at having let the good times go, I turned to the bottle'.¹⁰⁰ Hughie Gallacher, Scottish goal-scoring genius, also could not cope with leaving football, drank heavily, lost his wife, and eventually, in 1957, when facing an assault charge, threw himself under a train.¹⁰¹ Cricketer John Sullivan, a Lancashire player in the early 1970s, 'couldn't accept that part of my life was over' and took to heavy drinking.¹⁰² A century before, alcoholism took its toll on several Victorian cricketers when they retired including William Barnes, J.T. Brown, Tom Emmett, William Lockwood, and Bobby Peel.¹⁰³ One of the most tragic examples of this syndrome was former world flyweight boxing champion Benny Lynch, who, before his drink-related death in 1946, was known to invite Glaswegian pub customers to punch him in the face for the price of a drink.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless it must be stressed that in these and other cases it is not clear what can be attributed to sport and what to the personality of the individuals concerned.

96 Root, *A cricket pro's lot*, p. 170.

97 Vamplew, 'Still crazy', p. 115.

98 Based on information supplied by Jockey Club Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Michael Turner.

99 Interview, 2 June 1999.

100 Jimmy Greaves, *Greavsie* (London, 2003), 218.

101 Tony Rennick, 'Hard times' in Richard Cox, Dave Russell & Wray Vamplew, *Encyclopedia of British Football* (London, 2002), pp 171-172.

102 Frith, *By his own hand*, p. 8

103 Keith Sandiford, *Crickets and the Victorians* (Aldershot, 1994), p. 104.

104 Rudolph Kenna & Ian Sutherland, *The bevy: the story of Glasgow and drink* (Glasgow, 2000), p.88.

Breaking the nexus?

Although those sports bound by International Olympic Committee regulations prohibit alcohol as a performance-enhancing drug, it is the performance-debilitating effects and social consequences of alcohol that concern most sports authorities. Some have introduced compulsory drug tests which look for both performance-enhancing and recreational substances, but, apart from the Jockey Club regulations where safety is a major issue, none of these include alcohol.¹⁰⁵ As alcohol is a legal recreational drug, its prohibition, except for safety reasons as in occupational restrictions on pilots and train-drivers, may infringe human rights. However, most sports have a clause in their disciplinary codes on 'bringing the game into disrepute' which, if enforced, could lead to punishment after misbehaviour and thus possibly have a deterrent effect. In recent years, although the Football Association has taken a firm line against drug offenders, it has adopted a less strict position in respect of alcohol abusers, especially where this has been due to diagnosed alcoholism. It has recognised that alcoholism is a disease rather than a moral failing. Paul Merson, who publicly confessed his addiction to alcohol and drugs, was ordered to spend six weeks in a rehabilitation clinic but no other punishment was imposed.¹⁰⁶ Some people regarded this excessively lenient, but, as the Association's media officer pointed out, it acknowledged that drinking on this scale was an illness and 'players are human beings with real feelings'.¹⁰⁷

In the late nineteenth century Montague Sherman argued that rigid rules need not be imposed on sportsmen as, unless they had the self-discipline with regard to diet and drink, they 'will never be any account as an athlete'.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless most clubs believed that another form of discipline was required. When the chairman was a committed teetotaler, as was Charles Clegg at Sheffield Wednesday, strict policies were enforced. No Wednesday player was allowed to work or even live in a public house and indeed club captain, F.H. Crawshaw was dismissed when he became a publican.¹⁰⁹ Wednesday also disciplined some of its players for excessive drinking which had adversely affected their match performance; and, when one of them was also found guilty in the magistrate's court of drunk and disorderly behaviour, the club imposed a month's suspension and shortly afterwards put him on the transfer list.¹¹⁰ In contrast to the Sheffield team, most football clubs had directors with links to the alcohol industry, but they too adopted a crime and punishment approach with fines and suspensions being used as deterrents.¹¹¹ English international Stephen Bloomer was fined and suspended several times by Derby County for insobriety and neglect of training.¹¹² Aston Villa's board employed a private investigator to look into allegations of drunkenness and associated misconduct by the club's players and Heart of Midlothian, among others, disciplined several players for drunkenness while travelling or training.¹¹³ This occurred in rugby too. Wakefield Trinity expelled two of its players for

105 Jockey Club, *Protocol and rules for the testing of riders for banned substances* (London, 1994).

106 *Guardian*, 19 Sept., 1 Nov. 1996.

107 'My sporting life: Clare Tomlinson', *Total Sport*, March 1999, p. 36.

108 Shearman, *Athletics and football*, p. 173.

109 Minutes of Sheffield Wednesday F.C., 5 Oct. 1898, 19 Feb. 1908.

110 Minutes of Sheffield Wednesday F.C., 23 Feb. 1898, 5 February, 2 April 1902.

111 Vamplew, *Pay Up*, pp. 161-170.

112 Tony Mason, "'Our Stephen and Our Harold": Edwardian Footballers as Local Heroes' in Richard Holt, J.A. Mangan & Pierre Lanfranchi, *European Heroes* (London: 1996), 80-81.

113 Matthew Taylor, "'Proud Preston": a history of the Football League, 1900-1939, (PhD thesis, De Montfort, 1997), p. 208; Minutes of Heart of Midlothian F.C., 21 Oct. 1895, 19 Nov. 1910.

going out drinking the night before a shock defeat in the Yorkshire Cup semi-final.¹¹⁴ Such disciplinary policies prevailed for many years. Nevertheless, although clubs often set rules to regulate a player's off-field activities, apart from a late-night curfew these could be lax and leave much to a player's discretion.¹¹⁵

In more recent times Arsenal, for one, appear to have adopted a disciplinary approach tempered with sympathy when a problem became acute. Paul Merson was fined, suspended, and sent home from an overseas tour for his alcohol-related misbehaviour, though the club chairman claimed that the board never contemplated dismissing him. Finally when he sought treatment, the club stood by him, and continued to pay his wages while he was hospitalised.¹¹⁶ In 1991 Aston Villa paid for Paul McGrath to enter a detoxification clinic.¹¹⁷ Many managers, especially those who utilise drinking sessions for team bonding purposes, adopt the philosophy of Ron Atkinson, who maintained that 'as long as an individual didn't betray his club with bad social behaviour because of drink, and always performed to his potential on match day, then limited quantities of liquor at the appropriate time were acceptable'.¹¹⁸ On the other hand Arsene Wenger, the French manager of Arsenal, the team that employed both Adams and Merson, cleaned up his club by not allowing the team to drink at all as a group.¹¹⁹

At the international level James Cowan, captain and centre half of Scotland, played against England in 1898 when inebriated, and was never chosen again by the national selectors. One Scottish committee member maintained that 'after Cowan, we shall see that teams are under the care of the trainer from the Friday until the match'.¹²⁰ However, by the 1960s even the England manager, strict disciplinarian Alf Ramsay, was prepared to allow his squad to drink providing that it was in the team's hotel.¹²¹ The current manager, Sven Goran Eriksson, has adopted a similar policy but has stated that 'if you play for England you don't need to drink wine or beer'.¹²²

As Sherman stated over a century ago, the real key is self-discipline. In football the players' union is helping its members avoid the perils of alcohol. Till recently the Professional Footballers' Association never focussed on the issue of alcohol abuse, but has always been prepared to help players if they needed to go into clinics or hospitals for rehabilitation.¹²³ Now the Association has stepped in to try and change dressing room culture, something that it felt had altered little from the 1970s.¹²⁴ At senior level the old pros still had the attitude that you could always sweat out last night's booze at training, and that 'the beginner is only too apt to be led by the old stagers' remains as true today as in 1906 when the union secretary wrote the comment.¹²⁵ The opportunity to rectify the situation came with the establishment of academies for young players by most professional clubs. Finance was

114 *Yorkshire Post*, 25 April 1889.

115 John Moynihan, *The soccer syndrome* (London, 1966), pp. 139-141. Interview with Archie Andrews, left half for Crystal Palace and Queen's Park Rangers in the 1950s.

116 Merson, *Rock bottom*, pp. 32, 37, 44, 84-85.

117 Campbell, May and Shields, *The lad done bad*, p. 141

118 Atkinson, *Big Ron*, p. 95.

119 *Mail on Sunday*, 19 Sept. 2004.

120 Weir, *Drink, religion and Scottish football*, note 60.

121 Greaves, *This one's on me*, p. 50.

122 *Daily Telegraph*, 5 Feb. 2001.

123 Letter from Gordon Taylor, Chief Executive PFA, 15 March 1999.

124 Interview with Micky Burns, PFA., 5 May 1999.

125 John Cameron in *Spaldings Football Guide* 1906.

obtained from Adidas to develop an educational programme to coach players for life rather than just for football. The efficacy of the scheme has yet to be evaluated, but doubtless it will be aided by the influence of the influx of foreign players in British Football with their more temperate habits.¹²⁶ In other sports players have lessened their intake of alcohol voluntarily. In cricket there has been a decline in drinking after the game and many players stick to non-alcoholic drinks.¹²⁷ One impact of professionalism on rugby union has been for the elite player to abandon the membership norm of the amateur version of the sport and reduce alcohol consumption to a level deemed consistent with professional playing performance.¹²⁸ Training is no longer a 'social gathering' and the transformation in post-match drinking is epitomised by the Scottish international dressing room which used to receive a keg of the sponsor's beer but now waits two hours before the players touch alcohol.¹²⁹ It is ironic that the money brought into sport by sponsorship from the alcohol industry may have resulted in a more responsible attitude to drinking by sportspersons who have become more 'professional'.

Conclusion

Britain is a society with an alcohol problem. The British Medical Association says that the drinking habits of adolescents are creating a health time-bomb; random breath tests are being introduced into army where alcohol abuse is costing £100m a year and is responsible for 70% of courts martial; there has been an expansion in female binge drinking in 16-24 age group; and it is estimated that alcohol-induced sick leave, unemployment and premature death is costing the country £3.3 billion a year.¹³⁰ In such an external environment it is unsurprising that sport should itself face issues associated with alcohol.

The relationship between alcohol and sporting performance has changed over the past century. Traditionally, alcohol was seen as an aid to strength, stamina and courage. But today, apart from a few sports that require a steady hand for aiming, such as darts, shooting or archery, alcohol is no longer regarded as a performance-enhancing drug. Concern now centres on how drinking by sportspersons affects their non-sporting behaviour. Alcohol consumption in sport has now become a social rather than a sporting issue. Here there are tensions. The main one is simply the anomalous association between an activity generally seen as being good for you and one that is not. However, there are other contradictions. Sponsors want to see their products consumed at post-match ceremonies but coaches want their athletes to restrict alcohol intake especially when re-hydration is necessary. Managers want their players to behave but are reluctant to discipline those who might win them a title. Some prohibit their players from consuming alcohol but others believe that drinking together helps bond a team and thus institutionalise binge drinking. Clubs overtly criticise players who let the club down but at the same time often market their own brands of wine and beer. Players know that drinking alcohol might adversely affect their performance yet

126 Interview with Billy Brown, assistant manager at Kilmarnock, 13 Dec. 2004.

127 Simon Hughes in Stewart, 'Alcohol, the ethical dilemma', p. 39.

128 Stewart, 'Alcohol, the ethical dilemma', pp. 38-45, 58.

129 Ibid., p. 106. Scott Hastings, Scottish rugby union player, Radio 5, 4 June 1998.

130 *Sunday Telegraph*, 14 March 2004; *Daily Telegraph*, 30 July 2004; *Daily Telegraph*, 11 May 2000.

they find that their employers are tolerant of a drinking culture, a continuation into professional ranks of a long-established amateur tradition.¹³¹

Selected Bibliography

(collated from the footnotes by the editor)

- Adams, Tony (with Ian Ridley) *Addicted* (London, 1998)
 An Operator, *Selections from the Fancy; Or True Sportsman's Guide* (Boston, 1972: orig. 1828)
 Arnold, Peter *Darts* (London, 1984)
 Atkinson, Ron *Big Ron: a different ball game* (London, 1998)
 Borrowes, Bill *The Hurricane* (London, 2003)
 Campbell, Denis, Pete May and Andrew Shields *The lad done bad* (Harmondsworth, 1996)
 Chandler, Timothy J.L. and John Nauright *Making the rugby world* (London, 1999)
 Curtis, H.L. *Principles of training for amateur athletics* (London, 1892)
 Davies, Jim *The book of Guinness advertising* (London, 1998)
 Dowling, Vincent *Fistiana, or oracle of the ring* (London, 1868)
 Duckworth, Leslie *The Story of Warwickshire cricket* (London, 1974)
 Ford, John *Boxiana*, (London, 1976)
 Frith, David *By his own hand: a study of cricket's suicides* (London, 1991)
 Gascoigne, Paul (with Hunter Davies) *Gazza* (London, 2004)
 Greaves, Jimmy *Greavsie* (London, 2003)
 Greaves, Jimmy *This one's on me* (Newton Abbot, 1979)
 Harrison, Brian *Drink and the Victorians*, (Keele, 1994 edit.)
 Holt, Richard, J.A. Mangan and Pierre Lanfranchi, *European Heroes* (London: 1996)
 Hutchinson, Horace *'Bert Edward the Golf Caddie* (London, 1903)
 Kenna, Rudolph & Ian Sutherland *The bevy: the story of Glasgow and drink* (Glasgow, 2000)
 Knebworth, Viscount *Boxing* (London, 1931)
 Lehman, R.C. *Rowing* (London, 1898)
 Macbeth, J. *Women's football in Scotland: an interpretive study* (Ph.D. thesis, Stirling, 2004)
 May, Pete *Sunday muddy Sunday* (London, 1998)
 Merson, Paul (with Harry Harris) *Rock bottom* (Bloomsbury, 1995)
 Mortimer, Roger, Richard Onslow & Peter Willett *Biographical encyclopedia of British flat racing* (London, 1978)
 Moynihan, John *The soccer syndrome* (London, 1966)
 Patmore, Angela *Sportsmen under stress* (London, 1986)
 Pete Davies, *I lost my heart to the Belles* (London, 1997)
 Piggott, Lester *Lester* (London, 1995)
 Radford, Peter *The celebrated Captain Barclay* (London, 2001)
 Reilly, Thomas 'Alcohol, anti- anxiety drugs and sport', in David R. Mottram, *Drugs in sport* (London, 1996)
 Roebuck, Peter *It never rains ... a cricketer's lot* (London, 1984)
 Sandiford, Keith *Cricket and the Victorians* (Aldershot, 1994)
 Shearman, Montague *Athletics and football* (London, 1888)
 Stainback, Robert D. *Alcohol and sport* (Champaign, Ill., 1997)
 Steel, A.G. and R.H. Lyttelton *Cricket* (London, 1893)
 Tanner, Michael & Gerry Cranham *Great jockeys of the flat* (Enfield, 1992)
 Taylor, Matthew "Proud Preston": a history of the Football League, 1900-1939, (PhD thesis, De Montfort, 1997)
 Thornett, Ken (with Tom Easton) *Tackling rugby*, (Melbourne, 1965)
 Vamplew, Wray and Joyce Kay *Encyclopedia of British horseracing* (London: 2005)
 Vamplew, Wray *Pay up and play the game* (Cambridge, 2004 edition)
 Watts, Gerald *Royal St Georges* (Sandwich, 1996)
 Weir, John *Drink, religion and Scottish football* (Renfrew, 1992)
 Welcome, John *Fred Archer: a complete study*, (London, 1990)
 Williams, Russ *Football Babylon* (London, 1990)
 Wootton, Steve *Nutrition for sport* (London, 1989)

¹³¹ Paul Weaver, 'Slaves to the Corporate Rhythm', *Guardian*, 27 July 1999.