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EDITOR: W. LEBEDEW, 3 Owen Avenue, Blair Athol. 508

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Editorial



If there is any single word of vital importance to amateur and professional sport alike, which should always be spelled in large capital letters, it is SPONSORSHIP. Needless to say it is the action rather than the word which is significant.

Sponsorship in one form or another dominates the modern sporting scene throughout the world. It is usually derived from one or both basic sources -government and/or commercial. In socialist societies, where private enterprise is low key, sport is wholly sponsored by government agencies using funds often acquired through sporting lotteries, e.g. U.S.S.R. In capitalist democracies such as ours, sponsorship is carried almost entirely by commercial interests, with central government support compara-

tively insignificant.

How does sponsorship work and what can be done to get a share of it, should be a question for every sports administrator. Sporting sponsorship in Australia, which in recent years has topped the \$50 million mark is basically thinly disguised advertising with colour television providing the vital catalyst. For some, like cigarette companies which are banned from advertising their products on television it is an obvious outlet, for others it is a means of catching the public eye. Sport on colour TV is perhaps one of the most dramatic spectacles available to viewers and ratings show its ever increasing popularity, which in turn continues the upward sponsorship spiral. With television the vital key, a simple rationale for the sponsor is something like - will sponsorship give access to the media if so does media sponsorship sell my product. If the answer to both is yes it is purely a matter for negotiating the terms, which in itself can be an awesome task for a spare time amateur official. Once these factors are resolved, actual attendance at the game becomes immaterial and provides little more than a bonus for the sport concerned. Australians have often been tagged as 'sport crazy' and it may very well be a valid label, especially if physical exertion is not necessary. Some survey facts recently published in "Signature" indicate some remarkable figures for participation in proportion to the population: swimming 10%, golf 7%, tennis 6%, fishing 5%, squash 5%, bowls 4% and snooker 4%. Even more remarkable are spectator numbers (mostly TV): football 35%, soccer 15%, cricket 15% horse racing 12%, boxing 10%, tennis 10% and golf 6%. There may only be 6000 spectators in the tennis yet the Marlborough logo is seen continuously by some two million others. The beery message "North have Courage" is exposed throughout the winter in live telecasts and interminable replays backed by some 15% of Courage's advertising budget. VFL premiers Hawthorn carry Wynn's wine labels. Phillips, Rothmans and Coca Cola have latched on to the badly under exploited Australian soccer, paying out well over one million a year and the Benson and Hedges Company "proudly presents" the currently very mediocre Australian cricket scene. Basketball, golf, motor racing and even spectator non-events like gliding and bowls have found prosperity in sponsorship.

Volleyball, which is widely recognised as one of the most spectacular and

demanding sports in the world must fight its way on to television screens and into sponsors' cheque books or perish as a top line competitive sport and revert to its original Australian image of a recreational activity. This can only be achieved by a highly professional approach in administration and promotion backed by technical expertise. It may not be long before these concepts come to fruition and the often intolerable financial burden carried mostly by players, is lifted to boost the sport to its appropriate level.

Joe Hiller Retires

Joseph Hiller, one of the outstanding motivators of Australian volleyball development over the past decade, has retired. For many volleyball followers across the country it will be difficult to comprehend that Joe will no longer appear on the coach's bench for Victorian and Australian teams, scheming patterns of play which would overcome the opposition, exhorting his teams to a final supreme effort or having a quiet beer with his friends once the battles for volleyball supremacy have ebbed. During an outstanding career spanning eleven years, as coach of Australia's premier men's volleyball State Joe has contributed a tremendous amount of time, energy and money to the sport which for many years was his prime factor in life to the detriment of other considerations. He has known the sweet taste of success as well as bitterness of defeat, which after all is an essential ingredient in any field of human endeavour.

Taking over coaching duties of the Victorian State team in 1968 he scored a first up success, breaking the title hegemony held by New South Wales during the previous four years. Then came years of team building and bitter disappointments: Some of the most brilliant and talented teams Victoria has produced foundered in the holocaust of the nerve-racking annual event, known as the Volleyball Championships of Australia. The inevitable day of reckoning came in 1972 in Sydney when the Victorians under Joe's tutelage regained the title by a narrow margin despite a defeat against New South Wales. This has remained their last defeat to date.

During this decade Joe coached and guided many outstanding Victorian and Australian players, among them Les Maklary, Ilke Veijalainen, 'Ozzie' Ozolins, Nick Kimoff, Hans Siig, George Mraz, Stewart Uher, Jack Atkins and last but not least his own son John.

With his wife Celina, who has supported him over the years, Joe has settled into a new home in the Melbourne suburb of East Oakleigh, to lead a full social life, plan a return trip to his homeland Poland, later in the year and perhaps still follow Australia's and Victoria's volleyball fortunes on occasions.

The 'Volleyball Journal' is proud to present an interview conducted by George Mraz and wish Joe all the best in the future.

Volleyball Journal Interview

- GEORGE MRAZ TALKS TO JOE HILLER

V.J. How was your interest in volleyball generated and at what level did you play?

J.H. *Actually, volleyball was my number three sport. I had 32 bouts as an amateur boxer and played soccer on a regular basis. Whilst in the Army for two and a half years, my interest became more intense. After completing a Physical Education course in Warsaw, I began coaching a Second League club in 1955. Incidentally, we played and beat a Chinese National U23 team during that time. I coached and played until my arrival in Australia in 1960.*