

# Sport and Democracy

Ove Korsgaard

Professor Emeritus

DPU, Aarhus University

# Gerlev Idrætshøjskole 1974-1991

- "Idrætsforsk", a research center dealing with the humanities and social sciences of body culture (*Claus Bøje, Søren Riiskjær, Ejgil Jespersen, Henning Eichberg*)
- "Gerlev play ground", a 'living' sports historical workshop (*Jørn Møller, Lars Hazelton*)
- Gerlev-award (*Donati, Jenkins, Play the game*)
- "Play the game", (*Jens Sejer Andersen*)

# Gerlev Idræthøjskole



# Play ground and Art movement house



# What kind of connection is there between sports and society?

- At "Idrætsforsk" we differentiated between sport and body culture. Sport is only a particular kind of body culture.
- At "Idrætsforsk" we were particularly interested in the connection between industrialization and sportification
- Sport was the dominant form of body culture in both modern totalitarian and democratic states

# What kind of connection is there between sports and democracy?

- According to Paul Christesen “there is a considerable body of evidence that strongly supports the arguments that horizontal mass sport is, in and of itself, an important form of democratization and that horizontal mass sport both springs from and reinforces democratization on a societal level. Sport, in other words, shows every sign of being a school for democracy”.
- Paul Christesen: Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds, Cambridge University Press, 2012:266.

# Horizontal and Vertical Sport

TABLE 1. *Characteristics of Horizontal and Vertical Sport*

	Horizontal Sport	Vertical Sport
Organizational Structure	Organizers and participants are either one and the same or have similar status or social power	Organizers have significantly more status or social power than participants
Degree of Regimentation in Playing of Sport	Low (emphasis on autonomy of participants)	High (emphasis on conformity among participants)
Stated Goals	Emphasis on benefits to individual participants	Emphasis on benefits to collectivities such as the state

# Counterproductive to democracy?

- According to Paul Christesen, "it may well be that horizontal mass sport promotes democratization until a certain threshold is reached, after which point it is either irrelevant or counterproductive".
- Paul Christesen: Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds, Cambridge University Press, 2012:266.



# Sport and democracy

- Sport and amateurism
- Democracy and marked (free competition for money)
- Democracy and public sphere (free competition without money)
- Money poses a threat to the public sphere and democracy
- In the cashless amateur sports athlete can compete for strength of character, beauty and form and show fairness, fair play, and sportsmanship

# Money and corruption

- Power corrupts. Money corrupts
- There is not a causal connection between money and corruption. But it requires great strength of character to avoid.
- However, character is not enough to avoid corruption, democracy, rule of law and a critical press is needed.