

Unusual Sports

Transcription by Evernote

Good evening. All the time, people talk about sports such as football, basketball, hockey, and these sports are the most popular sports in our society. Why are they the most popular? It really has nothing to do with the funness of the games. There are a lot of other sports that are extremely fun, but they are not nearly as popular as these four I mentioned.

Since people so often talk about the popular sports, it's time to talk about the less popular sports. Federation Without Television exists to provide a forum for the expression of ideas ignored, suppressed, marginalized, vilified, and underrepresented by the mainstream media. Certain sports are underrepresented and ignored by the mainstream media.

A fine example is shuffleboard. How many people out there have played shuffleboard? Probably not that many. I have barely ever come across a shuffleboard. The only time I ever did was when I worked at this off-camp in Camp Menomonie, near Sugar Camp, Wisconsin. Sugar Camp, Wisconsin is near Mapleton, Rylander, and Eagle River. None of those towns are extremely prominent, so you still probably have no idea where I'm talking about. Just think of somewhere in northern Wisconsin. I vaguely remember trying it out a little bit.

Federation Without Television had a table tennis speaker give us a presentation. He talked about why you love table tennis and also about the importance of sports in general. He even gave out a paddle. Along those lines, I tried to bring in a shuffleboard speaker. I went to a shuffleboard website. There was a bulletin board on that website. I posted a question: Can anyone give me any information about shuffleboard speakers in my area? At the time, I was in Wisconsin. Nobody replied to that post, so I didn't have any opportunities to find a shuffleboard speaker. That could have been a cool presentation.

A lot of people wear polo shirts. They are considered popular, fashionable, stylish [as observers note]. The upper crust wears polo shirts [as observers note]. Polo shirts are called that because they have a little picture of a person on a horse playing polo [Common Knowledge].

I have never played polo. I don't think I've ever rode horses either. It's hard enough to ride a horse for some of us. Just imagine not only riding a horse, but also playing a game as challenging as polo while riding a horse. It definitely takes some skill.

There's also water polo that I have played. It can be fun. It's a decent, solid game. I remember playing it in gym class somewhere along the line. There's also the beloved kids' game, Marco Polo. This is not a sport by any stretch of the term. In this game, one person is it. He or she counts to whatever number the given version of the game demands. While that person is counting, other people go away. When the count is up, the person with cold eyes yells out, Marco! The other players yell out, "Polo!" You're supposed to try and find the other player's faces on the sound of their voices. If you're able to catch somebody, that person becomes it.

I have played some croquet in my life. This is not to be confused with crochet. Crochet is not a sport. Crochet can help you make garments, but it's not a sport. I have found croquet to be challenging. It takes finesse to hit the ball just right. I have played it in various places. I think our family used to have a set. My friend from my childhood, Travis, may have had a set. I remember playing it maybe at a teammate's house in high school I was on cross-country [and] track [with]. Maybe playing it at another teammate's in college.

Ted Cepelina and I played croquet on the grounds of UW-Stevens Point. One time. It was during the summer, as I recall, or at least very near. There weren't many people around.

One game I don't think I've ever played is cricket. I don't think I've ever had an opportunity. I don't think I've ever seen it played. It's more popular in other countries. Here it's not popular at all. It's very rare that one would even have an opportunity to play it or just watch it. It's popular in Great Britain, mostly. Bill Bryson in his book, *In Sunburn Country*, about Australia, talks about “how dull he thinks cricket is.” He describes some cricket matches between Australia and Great Britain.

I definitely have played badminton. I have some very fond memories of badminton, in fact. When I was a lad, I played a lot with my friend Travis and his family. His brother liked to play, so did his dad. It was really cool of his dad to join us. Sometimes neighbors joined in, sometimes family friends joined in. We spent a lot of time out there playing badminton. That was a good move to purchase a badminton set, financially and otherwise.

My friend Travis could be temperamental at times. If a call didn't go his way, he would sometimes throw a racket down. Back in the day, I thought I was pretty decent. It seemed to go pretty well for me. Having been a freak for a long time, I played a prank on my friend involving badminton. I made up some badminton governing association. I drafted a letter from the group. The group said, because my friend's family had violated these badminton rules, such as:

- Mishandling badminton equipment.
- Allowing domestic animals to roam freely during badminton games on badminton grounds.
- Playing music with explicit lyrics during badminton games.

They were to be on badminton probation and lose their full license. They were to get a restricted license to play badminton while on probation. Mishandling equipment is self-explanatory.

The other two may be [harder to understand] In regard to allowing domestic animals to roam freely on badminton grounds, that refers to the

fact my friend Travis's dog, Pepsi, would be oblivious to the fact we were playing badminton. Sometimes the dog would get in the way or be induced on the side. Then you had to worry about birdies hitting the dog. In regard to playing music with explicit lyrics, my friend Travis got his Sir Mix-a-Lot CD. Not the most wholesome CD [like others have noticed]. He played that during badminton games.

My friend Travis said, "He knew it was a joke when he read his badminton probation officer was [t]his junior across the street." The junior across the street had a son that played with Travis and I sometimes. I considered that junior's son my friend for part of the time. My friend Travis has an ambivalent feeling about it.

I've been traveling in Canada and doing a lot of dealing about it. I may have played badminton here and there in gym classes since then. During my last semester of college, I had mostly taken the classes I needed to graduate. I only had to take a couple classes. I had freedom to take what I wanted to take. Thus, I didn't want to actually put a schedule if I didn't have to have it.

One of the less academically rigorous classes I chose was *Beginning Badminton*. It's very interesting how something I did for pure fun in my youth, I was able to get credit for in college. The professor of the class was a tennis coach at the university. She knew I was running from track and cross country. So that made it fun. We learned how to hit in the class. We also learned how to move. We played a lot of games in that class.

There was one member of my cross country team in that class. Sometimes when we played, I would joke around. I tried to jokingly distract people. I would say to my cross country teammate, hello so and so, such as our cross country coach, trying to make him look bad. In regard to the other people, I would say something such as, hello George Burns, how the devil are you? Usually that wasn't very effective. I don't think it ever was effective. It was more to be silly than anything else.

One woman in the class would swear. So once I joked that she had to lose a game because of swearing. Or maybe I joked about her losing points. The professor asked us for feedback. I said, "it would be great to learn about some of the interesting personalities." I think I also asked her a question about learning the history, which she told about the class.

When you think about it, even though badminton isn't that popular of a sport, there has to be some flamboyant personalities, right? Not everyone is dull as dirt. Even a sport like tennis has flamboyant personalities such as Andre Agassi and John McEnroe [like Mad Magazine noted].

The professor said, "she was thinking about doing an intermediate badminton class." That really didn't matter for me because that was my last semester there. In front of the class she said, "She used to give out awards. If she still did that, I would have been given an award for most improved." That was flattering to hear. It's good to improve.

Another reason Federation Without Television trying to bring in a badminton speaker. This person wasn't as eager to do it as some other people have been. Some people you would call up, they'll say, sure. Then you say, what time, when? You pick a date, it's done. Other people have more reservations.

This person from the badminton association had reservations. I didn't think they were warranted. He had this big deal about "stepping on the toes of what our badminton professor was doing." I assured him he didn't have to worry about that. When you think about it, this is really silly. Almost any outside speaker you could bring in would in some way overlap with some academic discipline. A lot of the time, professors think that's great. If somebody relates to their class, they tell their students to go. Sometimes they even offer extra credit.

I have had a sociology professor and a political science professor, among others, encourage people to come to a Federation Without

Television conferences. I was thinking it would be cool if the badminton professor could have encouraged people to come to a badminton presentation. She could have even offered extra credit, and she probably would have been happy with me for doing that. The person reluctantly agreed, but later he backed out saying, "He didn't want to interfere with what she was doing." Alas, alas, here we are trying to broaden the horizons of the university and everyone else. But this person doesn't go along with the wonderful idea.

Another obscure sport is handball. Federation Without Television tried to organize a handball talk. One dude from the Handball Association agreed. He told me, "he didn't watch much television himself, so he thought what we were doing was good." He happened to go to the Federation Without Television website. He did not like what he saw. He fired off an email to me saying, "he doesn't watch television much himself, but he found my anti-capitalist views too harsh." He said, "he did not want to be associated with someone like me", so the event was cancelled. We were trying to provide a forum for discussion of underrepresented sports. We were trying to give him a vehicle to rave about his view on passion. But alas, he did not go for it. Alas, fool's monument prevented him.

Much of the time, the speakers we bring in don't agree with Federation without Television, whole or in part. A few people agree entirely, but they don't have problems with giving a presentation.

One game I don't think I've ever played is Lacrosse. Lacrosse is popular enough to have leagues for it. I imagine there are leagues for it in the Twin Cities. I haven't looked, because I'm not particularly interested in that. But I imagine there would be. The Twin Cities is a major metropolitan area. The Twin Cities metropolitan area has over one million people. Thus, you would think there would be at least a couple of dozen in this area who would be interested in Lacrosse.

I have been to the state of La Crosse a number of times. My mom lives there. I even lived there for a short time. It's a nice city.

Tonight, we have come to discuss some unpopular, more obscure sports. Way too often people focus and concentrate on sports like football, basketball, baseball, and hockey. It is due time to provide a forum of discussion about sports such as:

- Shuffleboard
- Polo
- Wire and regular
- Croquet
- Cricket
- Badminton
- Lacrosse

Our mission has been accomplished tonight.

Good evening.