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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

PRESS AND RADIO CONFERENCE

THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
Vice President of the United States

29 March 1968

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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PRESS AND RADIO CONFERENCE

THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
Vice President of the United States

11:20 a.m.

29 March 1968

Indian Treaty Room
Executive Office Building
Washington, D. C.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Ladies and gentlemen,
3 we have just completed the first meeting of the President's
4 Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

5 This Council was established by Presidential
6 Executive Order. Its purpose is to coordinate the activities
7 of the Federal Government in all fields of recreation and
8 sports activity.

9 On this Council are Departmental heads or their
10 representatives. The Department of State for our inter-
11 national sports activities; the Department of Interior, who
12 is responsible as we know, for our National Park Service;
13 Housing and Urban Development; the Department of Justice;
14 Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the agency
15 of the Office of Economic Opportunity; and of course the
16 President's Council on Physical Fitness which is the base
17 structure, and the staff of that Council which acts as our
18 professional staff.

19 We are happy to tell you that it is not a victim
20 of what is known as Parkinson's disease. It has a modest
21 staff. I believe Captain Lovell said it has four professionals
22 and eight clerical. For the Federal Government that is
23 almost insignificant and we don't intend to make it much
24 more significant.

25 We hope to be able to accomplish our objectives

1 with a minimum amount of bureaucratic red tape or professional
2 services and professional employees.

3 I am very pleased to have with me today Captain
4 James Lovell, of the United States Navy. I am sure you all
5 know him as an astronaut. But he is also the chief consultant
6 to the President on the Council on Physical Fitness and
7 Sports.

8 I have asked the Captain how he was able to do
9 as much as he has been able to do because he puts in full
10 time as an astronaut -- he is on the Apollo program. He
11 may be the first person to establish a sports program on the
12 Moon. It is entirely possible.

13 But when he was asked a question as to how he
14 was able to do both of these jobs in Physical Fitness and as
15 an astronaut he said his normal base was 125 percent normal
16 base. He gives 25 percent of this time to this activity and
17 100 percent of his time to the astronaut activity and that
18 gives him a normal operating base of 125; and I have just
19 added on 25 percent more this morning.

20 Jim, you have some mighty good backfield men here,
21 and basketball men as well. Maybe you can show them how to
22 get that ball up a little bit higher so that the opposition
23 can't take it.

24 We are privileged to have here this morning some
25 of America's outstanding sports personalities, most of them

1 known to you here in this area. They are here to indicate
2 by their personal attendance the strong support for the
3 special summer sports and recreation programs which the
4 Physical Fitness and Sports Council will promote in our 50
5 largest cities. At least they will be giving of their time
6 and talent to this vitally important work.

7 When I say 50 cities that is the base we start with,
8 the 50 largest metropolitan areas. But we expect this
9 program to be much more comprehensive than the 50. We had
10 a program last summer and do have one known as "Operation
11 Champ" that works with the inner-city youth under our
12 Youth Opportunity Council.

13 Is Joe Scudero here?

14 Joe Scudero of the Physical Fitnesss Council has
15 undertaken this project in the past and he is continuing
16 with it. And that program is a going operation.

17 For your information the President's Council on
18 Physical Fitness and Sports and the President's Council
19 on Youth Opportunity are working in tandem, side by side,
20 working together on the whole problem or on the whole
21 challenge of recreation, entertainment, and physical fitness
22 in sports for our young people.

23 I happen to chair both of these Councils as Vice
24 President; I am the coordinator, so to speak, of these
25 activities.

1 Last year we had literally millions of young
2 people in our recreation program across the country in
3 sports programs; but we had a special sports program known
4 as Operation Champ in 10 major cities -- and Joe, you correct
5 me, you had about 200,000 or 198,000 active day-by-day
6 participants of inner-city slum kids, so to speak, kids of
7 disadvantaged families or disadvantaged neighborhoods, that
8 were active participants -- and we did it with little or no
9 staff and no money. We just went out and got the job done.
10 What we had primarily for staff were Neighborhood Youth
11 Corps boys and girls, young people that needed a job that
12 were brought in and given training; and we were able to get
13 the voluntary service of a number of our top athletes,
14 some of them working in the inner-city with our inner-city
15 youth.

16 I happen to believe the best thing that we can do
17 is to bring to the attention of our young people, and
18 particularly our inner-city youth, the wonderful opportunities
19 of sports and recreation; and to do it through the
20 personalities that are known and heralded in this nation. I
21 don't know of a single group of people in America that are
22 more highly regarded and justly so than our top athletes.
23 They are representatives of these professional athletes and
24 amateur athletes as well and we are very, very fortunate to
25 have this quality of leadership. And these men and women

1 are giving a great deal of their time to helping others.

2 Well, now, we have with us here -- you know Bobby
3 Mitchell of the Redskins, I think all of them know you here.
4 Chris Hanburger and Steve Thurlow, and we have Willie Wood
5 of the Greenbay Packers, and we have John Mackey of the
6 Baltimore Colts, and we have Ray Scott of the Baltimore
7 Bullets.

8 I believe, Willie, you are working with some of the
9 young people, aren't you?

10 MR. WOOD: Yes, I am.

11 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: You are doing this work
12 already and I gather most of you -- some of you I know are
13 giving your time and attention to it. I just wanted to once
14 again express our thanks.

15 Also here are representatives of a number of
16 volunteer organizations and association that will be helping
17 the Council during this summer.

18 During its first meeting the President's Council
19 on Physical Fitness and Sports placed the highest priority
20 on fostering a comprehensive program of sports participation
21 and competition for disadvantaged youngsters across the nation.
22 I am convinced that the champions of tomorrow are to be
23 discovered amongst these disadvantaged youth. Whether we
24 like it or not the youngster that is disadvantaged, so to
25 speak, from the poor family often is the best competitor

1 there is. He gets out and scrambles and scraps. He is
2 filled with a desire to win. And we are going to tap that
3 great reservoir of talent and it will be good for the nation;
4 it will be good for the individual; it will be good for our
5 reputation; it will be good for the physical fitness and mental
6 fitness of the young people.

7 Millions of youngsters from school this June will
8 swamp existing programs and facilities in most inner-city
9 areas and therefore we know we have to act and act now if we
10 are going to alleviate this critical problem.

11 We are in the process of organizing now a National
12 Sports Committee for youth. This will be privately staffed
13 and privately financed and will work right along side of
14 the President's Council. This will encourage and assist this
15 expanded emphasis on sports and recreation across the country.

16 I am going out to the business community, the trade
17 unions, the voluntary groups and ask them to put up the
18 money and the staff to launch the greatest sports program
19 this nation has ever known.

20 We envision local sports and recreation committees
21 at every level of government and particularly at municipal
22 levels being organized to work closely with the mayor's
23 Council on Youth Opportunities and the Youth coordinator in our
24 50 largest cities and the other cities.

25 So you have the President's Council, the National

1 Sports Committee, and in every city, a special committee of
2 people that are vitally interested in young people's sports
3 and recreation activities at work, giving their time, their
4 resources, their talent, on a private basis, to really
5 accelerate this sports program.

6 Of course we have already got many things going --
7 the American Legion with their junior baseball teams; we
8 have got civic clubs, and 4-H Clubs and Scouts and all kinds
9 of things. But we are going to maximize it.

10 Now at the federal level the President's Council
11 on Physical Fitness and Sports will take on the duty of
12 coordinating all federal youth programs.

13 Today I appeal to our mayors and our boards of
14 education across America to use all schools sports facilities
15 during this summer in both daylight and evening hours.

16 Now that is what this sign is all about.

17 And I hope that I can call on the media of this
18 country to arouse the public officials of this country to
19 use what is there. We really don't need to build many new
20 facilities right away. They are there. But all too often
21 these schools are padlocked during the summer. We have got
22 to open them. There ought not to be a single school play-
23 ground that is not used all summer long. And every swimming
24 pool ought to be used and every country club ought to open
25 its swimming pools to the disadvantaged.

1 I want to emphasize that wherever there is a private
2 club, or wherever there is a military installation that has
3 facilities for sports and recreation, some time should be
4 given to the needy and to the young people of the community.

5 Coaches and teachers and amateur and professional
6 athletes need to be mobilized to serve as instructors and
7 supervisors and leaders; and private businesses urged to
8 sponsor recreational and competitive athletic programs.

9 I am calling upon business firms to put people on
10 their payroll and then to loan them to the city or to a park
11 board or to a community agency as a recreation supervisor
12 or as a sports supervisor.

End #1

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I am calling upon American industry to equip playgrounds, to go to the mayor and ask him to block off a street and make that street into a temporary playground, putting in athletic equipment.

I am asking private business concerns to equip baseball teams, track teams, swimming teams, football teams, any kind of team. It doesn't cost much. Just save one cocktail party and you can pay for most of it.

We have got to have this kind of help. This spring and by the way, before I forget it, I want you to know that last year over 7,000 playgrounds were opened up by private industry. American business is showing a real social concern and a sense of community leadership. Right here in Washington, D.C., some of our department stores paid for playground activity, playground supervision, playground equipment.

I am asking the Department of Housing and Urban Development to look into every public housing project and see if he cannot find a space there for recreation activities. We ought not to build another single housing development that does not have facilities for sports and recreation.

We are calling upon our National Park Services to expand its walking paths, its jogging trails, its bicycle paths. We are going to call upon the state departments of recreation to do exactly the same thing; get this country physically fit.

LL 2

1 This spring, the President's Council will again
2 sponsor with the cooperation of the Advertising Council
3 this program, "Don't Fence Me Out." This public service
4 advertising effort is directed at local communities with the
5 message to keep school athletic facilities open and in use
6 during the summer, and I would like to ask every newspaper
7 to carry on their sports page -- and that is the page which
8 more people read than any other page -- I would like to have
9 them carry every day a little block that says this to remind
10 people that these schools are paid for by the public, they
11 belong to the public. And they ought to be opened, at least
12 for the recreational sports activities.

13 I would like to see our television media reminding
14 people every day in their community that there is a need
15 for supervisors, teachers, athletes, instructors, volunteering
16 to come and help with the young people.

17 Now the Council has made some recommendations today
18 and I will not keep you much longer. First of all, it has
19 commended the nation's amateur athletic organizations for
20 providing millions of Americans of all ages opportunities
21 to enjoy wholesome athletic activity in sports competition.
22 We have had to rely on these amateur athletic organizations,
23 and with whatever disputes they have, in their own way they
24 have individually done a good job.

25 Sports in the United States, as you know, is

LL 3 1 primarily an individual and private, non-governmental matter,
2 and in this spirit, our amateur sports organizations rendered
3 a major contribution.

4 The Council also commended by formal action, the
5 individual athletes, coaches and sports' governing bodies and
6 others who were contributing to a maximum American effort in
7 the 1968 Olympic games. I want you to know the thinking of
8 the Chairman of the Council. I think all across this nation,
9 we ought to have junior olympics at every county level, and
10 every state level with proper awards being made by governors,
11 and finally at the national level in preparation.

12 When you are in competition and you come in second
13 in a two-man race, you are last. And there is nothing, there
14 is not a thing you can gain in defeat in terms of moral
15 uplift and character-building that you cannot gain in victory,
16 and we ought to compete and compete within the rules, but
17 compete to win. And I am as sure as my name is Humphrey
18 that the champions are yet to be discovered in many of these
19 cities of ours. They are there.

20 I think it is desirable that the U.S. team that
21 goes to Mexico City, and by the way I am going to visit the
22 site on Monday. I am asking Captain Lovell if he will go
23 along with me. I am asking the former Governor of Massachu-
24 setts, "Chub" Endicott Peabody, who is a star in his own
25 right and works on the Mexican-American Sports Council -- I

LL 4 1 am asking him to go with us. We are going to go and visit
2 that site.. I am going for another purpose which relates to
3 nuclear test ban treaty, but I wanted to at least indicate
4 our keen interest in what the Government of Mexico is doing
5 in sports.

6 Let me repeat, I think it is important that the
7 team reflect the full vigor and variety of the American
8 society, and that the United States build the strongest
9 possible team for competition in Mexico City in October.
10 I urge every athlete to do his best. The Council urges all
11 qualified athletes to accept the challenge and honor of
12 representing their country in the world's foremost athletic
13 event. Might I say that it would warm your heart to listen
14 to the words of Jesse Owens. I do not know if any of you
15 heard him on the Tonight Show just a few days ago, but he
16 had something to say. He is a truly great man and a wonderful
17 citizen.

18 Of course he is more of my vintage, but I remember
19 that as a young man the thrill I got out of how he took care
20 of the supermen over in Berlin in 1936. And he looks as
21 good now as he did then. Gracious, that fellow looks remark-
22 able.

23 The Council strongly advocates that all qualified
24 athletes and sportsmen, regardless of race, color or creed
25 be afforded equal treatment in the selection and promotion

LL 5

1 of coaches and other management level personnel in both
2 amateur and professional sports. We believe in equal oppor-
3 tunity in this government and we do not only believe in it in
4 jobs or in housing or in public accommodations, we believe
5 in this for every aspect of life. And it is just about the
6 time, in fact the time is already late, that all qualified
7 athletes and sportsmen, regardless of race, creed or color,
8 be afforded equal treatment in the selection and the promo-
9 tion of coaches and other management level personnel in both
10 amateur and professional sports.

11 Your government is going to take an interest in this.
12 Leadership in sports should be based solely on individual
13 excellence and merit. The same standard which prevails on
14 the athletic field should prevail here.

15 At the management and the coaching level, apply the
16 same standard. Now the Council is concerned about the limited
17 representation of the members of America's racial minorities
18 in positions of sports administration. This situation is
19 surely not in the best interests of our country and surely
20 not in the best interests of sports itself. It denies a
21 basic principal of American life, equality of opportunity for
22 all.

23 Now I have dedicated a full life to this and I
24 am glad at long last I have my chance in the field of sports
25 and recreation because we are going to make the breakthrough.

ty 1

1 I was chairman of the Fair Play in Bowling Committee 20
2 years ago to break the racial barriers in bowling. It seems
3 like it is something you could hardly believe you could
4 ever have any barriers of race in bowling but we did and I
5 chaired that Committee across this nation and we were finally
6 able to win that fight. We are going to win this one too.

7 So those who stand in the way should surrender
8 quickly and it will be so much easier.

9 We are at a point in life where this kind of progress
10 I speak of is essential to the healthy growth of organized
11 sports and I think more essential to our national honor.
12 You can't expect people to go out and win for you. If you
13 are not willing to accept them into the positions of leader-
14 ship and managerial responsibility and if I do nothing
15 else between now and the time of my incumbency of Vice
16 President I am going to try and make an impact to see that
17 this great area of American life called sports is really
18 based on equal opportunity and on promotion according to
19 merit.

20 I think we will make it too and I don't think it
21 will take very long. Because most people think that
22 this is the right way to do it.

23 Any questions?

24 QUESTION: How do you decide who should be the
25 first for a coach among the minorities?

1 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think just judge people
2 on merit. That's all.

3 QUESTION: The reason I asked the question, there
4 have already been some Negro players who have been chosen
5 for these positions.

6 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: All I am saying is we
7 want to keep the gates wide open. A company always tries
8 to select the best manager it can get not on the basis of
9 how he spells his name or how he looks but how much goods he
10 can sell or run the plant.

11 QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, the potential success
12 of the Olympics is being threatened by boycott by American
13 Negro athletes here and by a threat of boycott on the part
14 of some other countries. Could you comment on that problem?

15 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I thought I made
16 as much comment as necessary. Every man in America has free
17 choice. We do not compel people to participate. At least
18 in matters that are beyond what we call national security.
19 We do have Selective Service laws. But when it comes to
20 sports, amateur sports, you can or may not. You may participate
21 or not. That is up to you.

22 I thought Owens made as beautiful a case as I ever
23 heard. I can understand the feelings of some people who feel
24 that they have not been treated justly. I am very sympathetic
25 to that but I think Mr. Owens made it clear that one of the

1 ways to make the breakthrough, to correct the injustice is
2 by coming out a champion and there you strengthen your case.
3 You strengthen your position. And I want to make it clear
4 I think the American people will have to make these
5 judgments individually. I hope they will do as I suggested,
6 that we will have a good cross section of America with all
7 of its vigor and all of its talent and vitality. I can't
8 think of anything that has done more to improve the quality
9 of citizenship in this country than the achievement of
10 what we call our minority athletes.

11 I don't like to call them the "minority." They are
12 fellow Americans as far as I am concerned. There is only
13 one kind of a citizen, American citizen, not second class,
14 all first class. And I think those in charge of the sports
15 activities, amateur or otherwise, need to understand that
16 fully. And when that is clearly understood I don't think
17 there will be boycotts and I don't think you will have any
18 trouble.

19 QUESTION: You said yourself we have had programs
20 like this before. Do you really think this kind of program
21 will have an effect on the type of ghetto youths like those
22 youths in Memphis who seemed to be bent on rioting.

23 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We know that it has a
24 constructive effect. We had a very constructive effect in
25 the District of Columbia. We have had it in other cities.

1 There is no sure cure for violence.

2 After all I have seen some young people from
3 very well-to-do families that have gotten out of hand that
4 had all the recreational opportunities in the world. I
5 am not trying to give a panacea here. What I am saying is
6 that sports and recreation is good for the person, good for
7 the body, good for the mind, good for the soul, good for
8 the community. And the more you do of it the better your
9 community will most likely be.

10 QUESTION: Is there any kind of a federal price
11 tag on this program?

12 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, sir. We already
13 have programs in the Federal Government that relate to young
14 people. But we do not have a special appropriation per se
15 for sports activities. However, for example, if my
16 recommendation for the Housing Department would be followed,
17 which I think it will be, namely, that in all of the housing
18 projects, that there will be physical fitness and recreation
19 facilities as a part of housing just like you ought to have
20 parking space.

21 Now the planning boards won't let you build a
22 department store unless you have parking space. The local
23 governments will not let the government put up a federal
24 building -- except in Washington -- you can't put up a
25 building unless you provide parking space. I see no reason

1 when you build a big housing complex that you ought not to have
2 regulations that if you are going to build a housing complex
3 you have places for people to play, for wholesome recreation
4 and sports.

End

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1 I think these are the sort of things that will be
2 built in, and some of them can be done right now, as a matter
3 of fact, without particularly any additional cost. The space
4 is there. The ground is there.

5 QUESTION: Mr. Humphrey, do you plan to directly
6 approach the owners of our major professional sports teams
7 on the question of administrative opportunities for the
8 Negroes?

9 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: If it is necessary. I
10 always believe in the power of suggestion. And I think that,
11 as one of the gentlemen said here, that is already beginning
12 to come about.

13 There may be those who are a little more recalcitrant
14 than others; but I think the trend is definitely in the
15 direction that I have pointed.

16 But I would have no hesitancy about speaking to
17 any American on the problem of equal opportunity. I do it
18 every week. I am Chairman of the Plans for Progress --
19 honorary Chairman -- in American Industry. I work with them
20 all the time. And we have opened up the gates of industry
21 to millions of jobs because we kept at it on a voluntary
22 basis; and we will have no hesitancy doing so in this area.

23 I don't know whether this will make you popular,
24 but I think it is the right thing to do.

25 QUESTION: Do you have any kind of goal for the

1 number of young people from the inner city, these 50 largest
2 metropolitan areas, that you hope to enlist this summer in
3 the programs you are talking about?

4 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPRHEY: The last one we had --
5 and Mr. Scudero, I think we agreed it was about 200,000
6 that we brought into Operation Champ, strictly inner-city
7 youth, and we had ten days to do it.

8 I see no reason why we couldn't bring in anywhere
9 from half a million to three-quarters of a million at least
10 in this kind of intensified recreational sports activity.

11 Quite frankly, I expect we can do better; but I
12 don't want to enlarge on the credibility gap. I want to keep
13 it within limits.

14 QUESTION: On your approach to private country clubs
15 to open their pools, and many of those are here in the Washing-
16 ton or Maryland or Virginia areas, what sort of response do
17 you expect practically from those clubs?

18 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We have already had some
19 very good response, even in terms of apartment houses and
20 so forth where they have swimming pools. They provide a
21 certain number of hours per week in which they bring in
22 young people from communities, settlement houses or neighbor-
23 hood houses, or some civic club working with them. We have
24 had good response, and I am just pointing out we have had no
25 trouble; wherever it has been undertaken, it has worked well.

1 There has been no difficulty. And I am asking that it be
2 expanded. And I would hope that every country club in America
3 would at least provide one day a week, a few hours a day at
4 a minimum, where they would be willing to share some of the
5 luxury of that club -- everything from a swimming pool to a
6 tennis court, or whatever it may be -- with youngsters that
7 are under supervision, not just letting them run wild, but
8 under supervision, to bring them to those facilities. It
9 won't hurt the facilities, and it will be a great experience
10 for them, really.

11 I have been doing this kind of work the last two
12 or three years. I have watched it work in the District of
13 Columbia, and it has been done. And I am asking for its
14 expansion.

15 QUESTION: Mr. Vice President, have you talked to,
16 or do you plan to talk to any of the Negro athletes who have
17 mentioned boycotting the upcoming Olympic Games?

18 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No, I have not. I haven't
19 gone into that. I am not even sure that I will do so. As I
20 said, I believe that these matters are matters of individual
21 choice. I have made my recommendations and expressed my
22 hope. I haven't had to experience some of the things these
23 men have. I just want them to know how proud we are of
24 their abilities. And not only proud of their abilities, but
25 I want to see those abilities fully recognized in every area

1 of life.

2 It is my view that when it is all over, that good
3 judgment, good citizenship, good reason, will prevail. There
4 may be some that decide not to go, but I tell you, when a man
5 comes out with one of those gold medals, or silver or bronze
6 medals, and stands up and speaks for his people and his rights,
7 he is all the stronger. I can't think of any better way to
8 forward the cause of equal opportunity in America than having
9 the champions speak up. When he is a champion, it is hard
10 to say he is wrong, because he has already been a winner,
11 and most likely the other guy has been a talker.

12 Maybe some of their friends would like to make any
13 comments -- on anything they would like to.

14 Might I ask Mr. Scott -- would you mind telling a
15 little bit about some of the work you have been doing? Would
16 you like to do that?

17 MR. SCOTT: I worked last summer with the Baltimore
18 Bullets, with the Operation Champ program in Baltimore. And
19 in Philadelphia I worked in the Department of Welfare with
20 youth. In Detroit I worked various camps. I worked my own
21 camp for five weeks out of the summer in Michigan. And I
22 plan to work camps again this summer also.

23 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: What kind of response do
24 you get from these kids?

25 MR. SCOTT: Tremendous response, because I find the

1 youth of today enjoy identifying themselves with athletes that
2 have made it from the ghettos, or they resemble somewhat
3 the background they are in. And when you are interested
4 enough to go into the neighborhoods and work with them, and
5 not take them out of it but show you are really interested,
6 and you show them basically that they can succeed, and they
7 can make it, and that they need all of the education they can
8 get. I never say, "You must go to college in order to make
9 it." I always say, "Try to get as much education as you
10 possibly can." Because some of them are not as fortunate
11 as I or some of the other guests we have.

12 But I think with the youth, that basically if we
13 work with them and show we are interested, that they will
14 become first-class citizens, number-one Americans. And I
15 think we are all interested in that.

16 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: You are a wonderful
17 example to them.

18 QUESTION: How do you answer some kids who are
19 disillusioned with everything? Let's say they favor rather
20 strongly "black power." What do you say to a kid like that?

21 MR. SCOTT: It is not, for me, too difficult to
22 understand. I used to be one of them. At that particular
23 time it probably wasn't fashionable to be an advocate of
24 "black power" or what-have-you.

25 The way you answer them is to merely relate the

1 trials and tribulations you had to go through to make it.
2 Like I said before, I think they can really identify with the
3 things that we have had to go through, each one of us, to
4 become professional athletes. And once they make the identifi-
5 cation and understand that a lot of doors were closed to you
6 but yet still you had to go on, you had the stick-to-itiveness
7 to stay in school.

8 These are the things we had to do, and they are not
9 doing anything different, and we weren't born with a silver
10 spoon either.

11 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very, very much.
12 Willie? You and I were visiting a little bit. Will
13 you come up here? You make me feel a little better.

14 Ray, I want you to bend your knees next time.
15 Willie, would you tell them about your work?

16 MR. WOOD: I have worked here in the District with
17 the Recreation Department as a roving youth leader. And
18 frankly, I sort of feel that work of this nature is so impor-
19 tant; and a lot of kids in deprived areas really are sort of
20 impressed in this area, and they don't have an opportunity to
21 see people of any professional standing.

22 So often the people in the area in which they live,
23 unfortunately the somewhat prosperous ones are the ones who
24 have done something illegal. And the kids see this guy and
25 like to pattern themselves behind him; and he is usually the

1 guy who has the finest automobile, has the finest home in the
2 block and everything; and they tend to pattern themselves
3 after him.

4 I think a lack of exposure has a lot to do with it.
5 Just my mere presence in the area -- it is hard to tell what
6 impact I might have on a community or a particular kid -- but
7 I just sort of feel my presence will help in some way.

8 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: It has, Willie. I get
9 around the neighborhood, as you know, and before we had Mayor
10 Washington, I sort of went around and played Mayor; and I
11 know what goes on.

12 QUESTION: Mr. Wood, could you tell us how you feel
13 about the boycott of the Olympic Games that is proposed by
14 the people at San Jose State?

15 MR. WOOD: I sort of feel any action that they might
16 take, in terms of their viewpoint, is the right action. If
17 you want to get something done, you have to take some action.
18 That is the approach I am speaking of.

19 Personally, I don't know anything about the Olympics.
20 I don't know anything about the treatment that the Negro
21 athletes have received in the Olympics. In my associations
22 and some of my affiliations with different types of sports
23 and with athletic coaches, some of the relationships really
24 aren't necessarily favorable. But I felt at times my presence
25 there, or just my mere being a part, really didn't have that

1 much impact. I sort of felt left out a lot of times. But I
2 sort of felt that in time these things would change; and in
3 time they did change. If I had perhaps taken a negative
4 attitude, I wouldn't be a Packer today.

5 I don't know what is really involved with the
6 Olympic athletes. I sort of hope they hurry up and sort of
7 solve the problem before the Olympics start. I would like
8 to see some of the Negroes receive Gold Medals.

9 QUESTION: Is your answer in terms of whether you
10 think it is good for Negro athletes to be in it, or you feel
11 it should be a personal approach?

12 MR. WOOD: I sort of feel that the issue of the
13 gripes a Negro athlete has is perhaps a very good one; and I
14 would say definitely to not participate. However, this is
15 something more of a selfish nature, and I say, "Why should you
16 be selfish?" The people of the United States suffer simply
17 because someone might perhaps have a selfish type of gripe.
18 It is hard to answer, because I don't really know what is
19 involved.

20 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much. You
21 are very helpful and very frank. You have done a great job
22 for our kids around here, Willie, and I want you to know how
23 much we appreciate it, those of us who have watched your work
24 not only here, but wherever you have been.

25 Now, Bobby Mitchell, is there anything you want to

1 say? I want you to know you're the hero in my neighborhood.
2 I had a group of kids around Sunday-ago out there where I live
3 in Southwest. There were only three or four things they
4 wanted to do -- one wanted to be a Marine; another wanted to
5 be Bobby Mitchell; another wanted to be a pilot; another guy
6 just said he wanted to be a football palyer -- he wasn't going
7 to take a stand on which one.

8 MR. MITCHELL: Yes, Mr. Vice President. I wish I
9 could be as fortunate as Ray Scott in the areas he worked in,
10 because he can very easily talk to those youngsters and let
11 them identify with him and get a lot done. But I have run
12 into a lot of problems when I am talking to a youngster and
13 I would like for him to identify with me, and would like for
14 him to accept what I say about it, but it becomes pretty
15 difficult, because it is difficult when he doesn't want to
16 be Bobby Mitchell, but he wants to be Willie Wood.

17 I would have to say that the last ten or eleven
18 years that I have been involved with the youngsters, and what
19 I like to call the medium adult age, many, many problems and
20 frustrations that we are so involved with now, the same
21 frustrations that a lot of these athletes we are talking about
22 who might not want to go to the Olympics, or are "anti" this
23 and "anti" that, are the same youngsters who were frustrated
24 years and years ago when, for instance, the school grounds of
25 schools and playgrounds was closed to them, and they went

1 through frustrations then of being told "you cannot have" and
2 "you cannot do." They have never been able to really do
3 anything constructive for their people, and all of a sudden,
4 they are top stars, through some help, of course -- and believe
5 me when I say I am speaking from a minority point of view,
6 you are really surprised how many didn't get much help. But
7 once they are top stars, and they went through a whole life --
8 and when you get up in your middle 20's, to an athlete, that
9 is sort of a whole life -- not really having done anything
10 constructive for your people, and all of a sudden they are
11 being asked to stop straddling the fence and make a decision.
12 Although athletes nowadays cannot be the Jackie Robinson's
13 of the past, they must contribute something; so you come to
14 the point where a lot of our athletes decide that this is the
15 time, and "I will do something constructive, so we won't go
16 to the Olympics." Most of us here today would be glad to
17 go to the Olympics. We are trying to do something constructive
18 for our people. We spend a lot of time, and in our own way
19 are trying to get them to do things, and these same individuals
20 would like to do it the same way. Unfortunately, some don't
21 have the time, but in their own way, they do constructive
22 things, and I would hope that any decision they have made
23 concerning the Olympics, that you will accept it as a fact
24 that they themselves feel they are doing the right thing,
25 and it is not anti-American or anything; it is just that

1 these are fine, great individuals, but they think they are
2 doing the right thing.

3 These are the carry-overs of the frustration of the
4 youngsters the Willie Woods, the Ray Scotts and the John
5 Mackeys are working with now within the United States. And
6 these frustrations are going to carry on for some years
7 that you are getting from some of the top stars now.

8 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much, Bobby.

9 I think we have had remarkable testimony here today,
10 and I want to thank you.

11 I didn't mean to pick out anybody here. Let's just
12 move along here.

13 Chris, is there anything you want to say?

14 Welcome to the podium.

15 MR. HANBURGER: Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

16 I would like to clarify one thing. My experience
17 in this type of work has been very limited prior to entering
18 professional football. I worked very closely with numerous
19 groups in Newport News and Hampton, Virginia.

20 Since I have been in pro football, I haven't been
21 associated with any program of this nature, but I would like
22 to let it be known I would give 100-percent backing to the
23 program. I think it is excellent; and any free time that
24 I have that I can donate to the program, it will be available.

25 Right now I am acting as Chairman of the Prince

1 Georges County Easter Seal Drive. And again, to me, this is
2 an excellent program, and I enjoy very much working with it.
3 And by the same token, I back this program we have discussed
4 here today 100 percent.

5 I just hope you will listen to what the Vice
6 President said when he asked the numerous people here to
7 spread this news throughout the country and just get the
8 backing, and getting it going. I think it is very important.

9 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much, Chris.
10 Steve?

11 We didn't call you all in for testimonials. We
12 assure you this is a completely unrehearsed program.

13 MR. THURLOW: It is a pleasure to have an opportunity
14 to speak on matters as pertinent to the youth today as this
15 is. I derive a great deal of satisfaction out of working
16 with programs similar to this, because I think -- and most
17 of the fellows can attest to the fact -- that we can draw
18 parallels to the lives we were brought up in, our training
19 and background and so forth, the opportunities afforded to
20 us in the athletic field and academically, and so forth,
21 specifically in this area.

22 We are all professional athletes, most of us. I
23 think you find the average professional athlete doesn't come
24 from, let's say, such a wealthy background, and consequently,
25 when we work with children like this, we can appreciate the

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1 difficulties that they have to overcome in being able to
2 achieve a certain amount of status, whether it be on the
3 athletic field, or academically, or whatever aspect in society
4 it might be.

5 Consequently, like I say, we can watch the parallels
6 between our lives and the lives of these children, and try
7 to import to them the importance of being able to establish
8 a rapport between their fellow man and camaraderie and brother-
9 hood, which I think is important in athletics.

10 That is why I think most of the fellows here today
11 can appreciate how important a program like this is, as
12 Chris said. I, too, devote as much time as possible to the
13 program, and I think most of the other fellows will, also,
14 because it is important.

15 Thank you.

16 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much,
17 Steve.

18 John Mackey, star of the Baltimore Colts, come up
19 here -- under these peaceful circumstances. I have seen you
20 out there.

21 MR. MACKEY: It is certainly a pleasure to be here.
22 I would like to say that we over in Baltimore are with you
23 100 percent.

24 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: You have been a great
25 help to us.

1 MR. MACKEY: We realize there are no great men,
2 only great challenges; and we are going to accept it.

3 I also would like to say that I haven't really had
4 the opportunity of getting out as much as some of the
5 other fellows but I know that I am going to do it now. I am
6 going to sacrifice, because I realize this is very important.
7 I know that it is important for the youngsters; and if any
8 of you have any doubt in your minds as to whether or not this
9 program will work or will be effective, just remember this --
10 that if we are able to convince one youngster to try for
11 excellence, and not be like a John Mackey or a Willie Wood,
12 but to strive for excellence and try to be whatever he wants
13 to be -- if we can convince one, then we will have done a
14 job.

15 Thank you.

16 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think we have kept you
17 long enough. I just can't adequately express my thanks to
18 the athletes who have come here today.

19 Jim, would you like to kind of close off this
20 meeting? Captain Jim Lovell.

21 Before I present Jim, I will just say what I said
22 in jest a moment ago -- it is literally true; we have asked
23 a few friends from the athletic world, but they never knew
24 they were going to be called on to speak. We didn't tell
25 them we wanted testimony. They have spoken from their

1 hearts, their own point of view. Every one of them is dis-
2 tinguished in his own endeavors in his own professional
3 field.

4 I, for one, am just flattered that they would come
5 and share with us, and I want to thank each and every one
6 for all the good work in the past; and more important, their
7 commitments to help us in the days ahead.

8 Captain James Lovell, would you sign off for us?

9 CAPTAIN LOVELL: Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

10 I feel rather humble among all these professional
11 athletes today. I am not one, but I am the President's
12 Consultant on Physical Fitness, and that is perhaps the key
13 of why I am here.

14 I feel this country has to be strong if it is to
15 meet the problems that we have to face today; and our job is
16 to make all Americans strong to meet these challenges. And
17 I am talking about the people in the audience, not just the
18 people over here.

19 So that is the goal and objective of the Council:
20 strong, physically-fit Americans.

21 Thank you.

22 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: That is all. Thank you
23 very, very much. I want you all to jog a mile every morning.

24 (Whereupon, at 12:10 o'clock p.m., the Press
25 Conference was concluded.)

Statement to the Press Following Meeting of the

PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

MARCH 29, 1968

The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has just concluded its first meeting under the chairmanship of the Vice President. I would like to brief you on several actions taken at this first meeting.

~~First, however, I would like to introduce our guests who are participating in this meeting. (If present) The Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, not only is a vigorous sportsman himself, but he believes everyone should follow his example. "Everyone should jog," is the Secretary's motto.~~

~~At present~~ Also with us is Astronaut Captain James Lovell, the President's Special Consultant on Physical Fitness and Sports. Captain Lovell holds down another job too: he is a member of the NASA Apollo team pointing toward a manned landing on the moon.

We are also privileged to have here this morning some of America's great sports personalities, both amateur and professional. They are here to indicate their strong support for the special summer sports and recreation program which the Council will promote in our 50 largest cities. These athletes will be giving of their time and talent to this vitally important work: ~~Ray Scott~~ of ~~the Baltimore Bullets~~ Bobby Mitchell, Chris Hanburger and Steve Thurlow of the Washington Redskins, and Charlotte Cook, one of America's brightest track stars. We are deeply grateful for their support.

Add ↓
Willie Wood - Green Bay Packers
John Mackey - Baltimore Colts

Also with us are representatives of a number of voluntary associations and organizations who we hope will be working closely with the President's Council on its summer youth activities.

*(Don't enumerate)
each organization*

At its first meeting, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports placed highest priority on fostering a comprehensive program of sports participation and competition for disadvantaged youngsters across the nation. The release of millions of youngsters from school in June will swamp existing programs and facilities in most inner city areas. We must act now to stimulate local action that can alleviate this critical problem.

We are in the process of organizing a National Sports Committee for Youth--privately staffed and privately financed--which will encourage and assist this expanded emphasis on sports and recreation across the country. We envision local sports and recreation committees being organized to work closely with the Mayor's Council on Youth Opportunity and the Youth Coordinator in our 50 largest cities.

At the Federal level, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports will work closely with the President's Council on Youth Opportunity, of which I am also chairman, the body charged with coordinating all Federal youth programs.

I appeal to our mayors and to boards of education across America to use all school sports facilities during the summer, in daylight and evening hours. Coaches, teachers, amateur and professional athletes should be mobilized to serve as instructors, supervisors and leaders. Private business is urged to sponsor recreational and competitive athletic programs.

This Spring the Council will again sponsor, with the cooperation of the Advertising Council, the "Don't Fence Me Out" campaign. This public service advertising effort is directed at local communities with the message to keep school athletic facilities open and in use during the summer.

The Council also commended the nation's amateur athletic organizations for providing millions of Americans of all ages opportunities to enjoy wholesome athletic activity and sports competition. Sports in the United States is primarily an individual, private and non-governmental matter. In this spirit, our amateur sports organizations render a major contribution to American life.

The Council commended the individual athletes, coaches, sports governing bodies and others who are contributing to a maximum American effort in the 1968 Olympic games.

It is surely desirable that the U. S. team reflect the full vigor and variety of American society and that the U. S. field the strongest possible team for the competition in Mexico City in October. The Council urges all qualified athletes to accept the challenge and honor of representing their country in the world's foremost athletic event.

The Council strongly advocates that all qualified athletes and sportsmen, regardless of race, color or creed, be afforded equal treatment in the selection and promotion of coaches and other management-level personnel in both amateur and professional sports. Leadership in sports should be based solely on individual excellence, the same standard which prevails on the athletic field.

The Council is concerned about the limited representation of members of America's racial minorities in positions of sports administration, both amateur and professional. This situation is surely not in the best interests of sports itself and it denies a basic principle of American life: equality of opportunity for all.

We are at a point in our national life where this kind of progress is essential to the healthy growth of organized sports in America.



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